Sandwell
CHRONICLE

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Just one party candidate to contest borough seat

UKIP SLIPPING OUT OF LOCAL ELECTIONS

Report by Peter Madeley

UKIP will contest just a single seat in Sandwell in this year's local council elections.

The party has entered a sole candidate for the 26 seats that are up for grabs on the Labour-dominated authority, with Graham Nock standing in Charlemont with Grove Vale.

It comes after the borough branch's six-strong committee quit in December, citing disillusionment over the direction in which the party was heading. The contrast could not be greater with Dudley, where UKIP has candidates in 19 wards.

For the May 3 poll it has entered two candidates for 22 seats in Wolverhampton, while UKIP representatives will battle for seven seats in Walsall.

Pete Durnell, a former UKIP candidate in Sandwell, said the election in the borough had come at a bad time for the party. "Nationally there has been a lot of upheaval, but it has survived and I think there are enough people interested to keep things going," he added.

Comatose

"While there are those who are trying to breathe life back into UKIP, in Sandwell it is comatose at the moment.

"It is a case of getting through the difficult times in the belief that things will eventually pick up again."

UKIP had formed the sole opposition on Sandwell Council until Princes End councillor Philip Garrett quit last August.

Two former UKIP council candidates and former committee members will contest seats for the anti-Islam party For Britain.

Darryl Magher is up for Great Barr with Yew Tree, and Steve Latham will contest Newton. The party has entered a third candidate, Sam Harding, in Charlemont with Grove Vale.

Labour currently holds 65 of the 72 seats in Sandwell. There are four independent councillors and Mahboob Hussain, who is classed as Independent Labour.

This year's election will see 26 seats contested in 24 wards. Councillors' Gurcharan Sidhu and Preet Gill have both stood down.

UKIP's influence on British politics has diminished rapidly over the last two years, and the party lost all 145 of the seats it was defending in the 2017 local elections.

SUPERHEROES' WELCOME FOR BRAVE OSCAR

Oscar who is back home from treatment in Germany, with his parents Mark and Cheryl Beadmore, plus Batman (Nick Davis), Perry Bear, and Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman

AS little Oscar Beardmore stepped off the plane after seven harsh weeks of cancer treatment abroad, he received the best surprise a young boy could wish for – Batman was waiting to welcome him home.

The superhero-obsessed youngster had been in Germany undergoing proton beam therapy, and just last week his parents were given the news they had been dreaming of – their son was now cancer-free.

The Wednesbury three-year-old has amassed a huge following on social media since he was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma – a rare form of soft tissue cancer – in June last year. And his supporters wanted to organise a special treat for him on his homecoming. After some stealthy planning, the youngster – who loves everything to do with the police – was met by Chief Inspector Kerry Blakeman straight off the aeroplane, who escorted him VIP-style through the airport.

He was then surprised by a hug from West Midlands Police mascot Perry Bear and then spotted none other than Batman himself.

Fantastic

Oscar's mother Cheryl Beardmore, aged 42, said: "He was really happy to see them, it made him feel really special. It was absolutely fantastic and we're so grateful – he really enjoyed it.Oscar was walking along and when he saw him he yelled 'Batman' and started running towards him."

Inside the Bat suit was actually Nick Davis, a local man who had been following Oscar's Journey on Twitter and wanted to give him the welcome he deserved.

Nick said: "I lost my grandad to cancer when I was about 12, and even now I've never really got over it. So I want to help other people who are going through this.

"I take my hat off to Oscar and his family. It was a very emotional day for everyone."

Oscar has a few more appointments with doctors just to check all his well, but his parents are hopeful he will be able to ring the End of Treatment Bell at Birmingham Children's Hospital at the end of this month. For more on Oscar's journey, visit facebook.com/followoscarsjourney

TRANSPORT

City roads are fourth worst in the country

COMMUTERS in Birmingham face the fourth worst congestion in the country. The research by Go Compare has found drivers are stuck in traffic in the city for 34 hours each year. It ranks behind just London, Manchester and Aberdeen for waits.

Birmingham also has the worst two roads in the country – the A34 Northbound between Robin Hood Lane and A4540, and the A34 Southbound between the A4540 and Shaftmoor Lane. On average drivers experience 43 hours of delays a year on these stretches. In 2017, there was an average delay of 47 seconds for every mile travelled on UK roads.

EDUCATION

Shireland school plans are lodged

A PLAN to expand a secondary school, and build a new free primary school on the same site, has been formally lodged with council bosses.

A new teaching block is set to be created at Shireland Collegiate Academy in Smethwick. A separate primary school, creating 420 new places, would also be built at Shireland, under the plans. The expansion at Shireland is expected to provide around 275 new secondary school places.

TRIBUTE

Tram may be named after legend Cyrille

A MIDLAND Metro tram could be named after Albion legend Cyrille Regis.

Transport bosses have come up with the idea to honour the Black Country hero who died in January. Cyrille's widow Julia described the plan as a 'lovely gesture' and said she would speak to decision makers further about the idea.

Thousands of people turned out for celebration of popular the footballer's life at an emotional service at The Hawthorns following his death.

INSIDE

MOORE'S MAN OF THE MOMENT

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CONTACT US

EDITORIAL:
Tel: 01384 353201/01384 353205
E-mail: sandwell.chronicle@expressandstar.co.uk

SPORTS:
Tel: 01902 319453
E-mail: chron.sport@expressandstar.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHIC: Tel: 01902 319430
E-mail: picturedesk@expressandstar.co.uk

ADVERTISING: Nicola Cope
Tel: 01902 319573
E-mail: nicola.cope@expressandstar.co.uk

PROPERTY: Colin Bailey
Tel: 01902 313131 ext 3731
E-mail: colin.bailey@expressandstar.co.uk

MOTORING: Stuart Whitehead
Tel: 01902 319177
E-mail: stuart.whitehead@expressandstar.co.uk

CLASSIFIED:
Tel: 01902 317878
E-mail: my-classified@expressandstar.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION: Paul Jones
Tel: 01902 319990
E-mail: p.jones@expressandstar.co.uk

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Former West Brom HQ sold for £3m

Sold – Society House

THE former headquarters of West Bromwich Building Society has been sold to a specialist residential developer for £3 million. Black Country property specialists Bond Wolfe, based in the town, has brokered the sale of what was one of the area's flagship sites.

Society House at 374 High Street, West Bromwich, was originally bought by Empire Property Holdings after the 169-year-old building society relocated to newly-built premises at Providence Place, West Bromwich, two years ago.

Doncaster-based Empire Property Holdings Ltd has now bought the 45,000 sq ft office building from the London-based family investment company and will be converting the building into 100 residential units.

Bond Wolfe managing partner James Mattin said: "It is fitting that in the year that Bond Wolfe celebrates our 35th anniversary, we have sold this locally iconic building. I am delighted that this building will be brought back to life as West Bromwich continues to progress through inward investment.

"The New Square and Providence Place developments have transformed the landscape in the town and it is important that High Street buildings are put to effective use to supplement the recent development in West Bromwich."

The acquisition is Doncaster-based Empire Property Holdings' first in the Midlands, having previously purchased properties in Yorkshire, Lancashire and the North East.

The company has an impressive track record for innovative commercial to residential renovations.

Six-storey Society House was purpose-built for the building society in the 1960s and was extended and refurbished over the years.

Town bucks retail trend with store openings up

WEST Bromwich bucked the Black Country trend for shop closures –with more stores opening than closing in a year. But in Smethwick the number of shops dropped by three.

West Bromwich finished 2017 with two more shops than at the beginning of the year, according to a new study.

The Local Data Company found that nine shops opened in the town last year, while seven closed.

They include a Starbucks, which opened in Birmingham Road in November, creating 30 new jobs.

But in Smethwick, the number of stores dropped. In Cape Hill, two opened and two closed. However, in Bearwood, four opened and seven closed.

The increase in shop numbers in West Bromwich comes a year after the Local Data Company said the town had a 22.2 per cent shop vacancy rate.

The council purchased the Saddlers Centre for £13 million last year. It has since made profits of £500,000. And St Paul's Bus Station is to be revamped under plans by Transport for West Midlands.

High streets in the West Midlands ended 2017 with 144 fewer retail outlets than at the start of the year, the research reveals.

Teacher banned over messages to girl, 14

A TEACHER has been banned from the classroom after sending hundreds of messages over social media to a schoolgirl, including one of himself lying bare-chested on a bed.

Jamie Hughes, aged 25, was suspended from Phoenix Collegiate school in West Bromwich when the mother of the girl called police after finding the content on her mobile phone.

The 14-year-old was not a pupil at Mr Hughes' school. At a professional conduct panel hearing held by the National College for Teaching and Leadership, Mr Hughes was ruled to have acted flirtatiously, but not by sexual motive. He was banned from teaching indefinitely.

Panel chairman Alan Meyrick said: "He (Mr Hughes) had clearly lost sight of his professional status and allowed boundaries to become seriously blurred."

Mr Hughes started messaging the girl when she was aged 12, but this stopped when the mother found the messages.

However, in April 2016, she again found messages on the child's phone from Mr Hughes, who was named as 'Harry Potter' on the device.

The hundreds of messages included one with 17 kisses. There were also phone calls, one lasting over an hour, and a photograph sent by Mr Hughes of him lying on a bed bare-chested.

Mr Hughes accepted that messaging the child was 'inappropriate and professionally unacceptable', but denied he had any intent to act flirtatiously when questioned by the panel. Mr Hughes is banned from teaching indefinitely at any school, sixth form or children's home.

In April 2016 he was suspended following the launch of a police investigation.

After police decided to take no action, the school held a disciplinary investigation meeting with Mr Hughes in the September of the same year. Two months later he resigned.

Life-saving binmen up for award

From left are Serco workers Michael Fox, Mohammed Arsib, Jason Tustin, and Javed Iqbal

A RECYCLING bin collection team who saved the life of a resident who suffered a stroke is shortlisted in this year's National Recycling Awards.

Driver Jason Tustin and loaders Mohammed Arsib, Michael Fox and Javed Iqbal collect blue lid recycling bins and food waste bins across the borough. The team have got to know many residents on their rounds and keep an eye out for vulnerable people.

Last December, they came to the aid of a man who had collapsed in his home and called the emergency services. They supported the police and ambulance in getting to him and the man's family credited them with saving his life – he had suffered a major stroke. He's since recovered and the crew continue to keep an eye out for him.

The crew, who work for Sandwell Council's waste partner Serco, are shortlisted in the Team of the Year – Commercial category. The team were nominated by their bosses because of their commitment to their job – as well as a series of achievements and good deeds they've done in the community. The team's managers regularly receive compliments about Jason, Mohammed, Michael and Javed – praising them for being friendly, helpful and committed to helping Sandwell recycle.

The winners will be announced on June 28.

Ross Kemp joins police on the job

POLICE in the Black Country were joined by a special guest on their patrols.

Ross Kemp followed officers on the job as part of a new TV show.

The TV hardman and former EastEnders actor, who has since gone on to forge a successful presenting career, posed for a picture with West Midlands Police officers after joining them on their patrols.

The force's Wolverhampton and Walsall Response account tweeted: "Ross Kemp and the production team where filming us doing our jobs. We should say thank you to them for taking the time to talk to the public. No one was pushed away or told no to a selfie. What a genuinely decent celebrity."

Kemp was also spotted popping into McDonald's restaurants.

Finest Hour concert by BBC Big Band

THE BBC Big Band visits Birmingham's Symphony Hall tomorrow, Friday, for a concert featuring the music of the Second World War.

Our Finest Hour – Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain starts at 7.30pm. The presenter is Lewis actor Kevin Whately.

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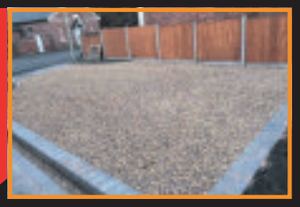

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Batson part of event to mark Powell speech 50th

A FORMER West Brom star and member of the club's famous Three Degrees will speak at an event marking 50 years since Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech.

Brendon Batson OBE will address a private audience on April 20 in the same hotel Mr Powell used for his infamous speech in 1968. The talk aims to showcase how the diverse communities of the Midlands reject Powell's vision of 'rivers of blood' – and instead have turned to 'rivers of love'.

Eleanor Smith, the MP who now holds Mr Powell's old Wolverhampton seat, Wolverhampton South West, will outline how the region has rejected Powell's vision and embraced tolerance and diversity.

Birmingham City Council leader, Councillor Ian Ward and MPs Shabana Mahmood and Preet Gill will also speak to attendees.

The event has been organised by the Midlands branch of the TUC.

TUC Midlands, Regional Secretary, Lee Barron, TUC regional secretary, said: "It's clear that Enoch Powell lost. We mark the 50th anniversary of his infamous speech in celebration and appreciation of the wonderful diversity of our region.

There will also be contributions from community representatives from across Birmingham, including a poem from the city's current Poet Laureate, Matt Windle, on the day."

It's May's day as she wins contest

A BEAUTY pageant princess from Walsall has been crowned a queen in an event that raises thousands for charity each year.

May Parry, aged 12, fought off tough competition from all over the country to take home the prestigious crown for Junior Miss Galaxy UK by volunteering in her local community and raising money for charity.

May Parry, 12

Thousands of pounds are raised by contestants each year for Christie, a cancer charity based in Manchester, and this year the finalists raised over £58,000.

One of her prizes was a trip to America to compete in the international final of Junior Miss Galaxy where she will go against girls from all over the world for the ultimate crown.

Her prize package included a £250 voucher to spend at The Dress Studio, gifts from Sass and Belle.

Spielberg's Spaghetti Junction boost

The famous Spaghetti Junction

SPAGHETTI junction has featured in the latest Steven Spielberg film.

The foundations of the 50 year old Birmingham road – officially known as Gravelly Hill interchange – formed the backdrop of 'Ready Player One' which was filmed in August and September 2016.

A 'camp' was built underneath and included props like cars and tyres, whilst special templates featuring graffiti were stuck to the concrete columns – some of which reach up to 80 feet high.

The film, based on Ernest Cline's novel, is set in the year 2045 and follows a young gamer escaping the real world for an immersive virtual universe known as the OASIS.

Frank Bird, Highways England, said it was an opportunity that they could not refuse.

He added: "We're thrilled to finally see the structure on the big screen and we were more than happy to facilitate filming for the staff and crew that were down on-site.

"We spent considerable weeks working with the film company and producers and they were really pleased to be allowed access underneath the road. Those travelling on the road had no idea what was taking place underneath and that is testament to the hard work and organisation that went into this facilitating this project.

"Work started on Spaghetti Junction some 50 years ago this year and it's great to see that the road continues to hold international acclaim."

Spaghetti Junction carries more than 220,000 vehicles every day and is subject to regular maintenance projects.

Burglar in axe attack jailed for seven years

A BURGLAR who attacked a 'petrified' householder several times with an axe after he was disturbed stealing from the property has been jailed for seven years.

A judge described the attack by 26-year-old Reece Parkes at a Great Barr house as 'horrific'.

The court heard how Parkes had stolen the axe after initially breaking into the garden shed of the property in Stanton Road, Hampstead, just before 6pm on January 10 this year.

He then used the axe to hack his way into the house and made his way upstairs where he stole jewellery from one of the bedrooms. He was still searching through the rooms when the occupier Patrick Glass returned home.

Seeing a light in a first-floor window, Mr Glass went upstairs, thinking one of his daughters was home but as he entered one of the rooms he felt a blow to the head, said Mr Howard Searle, prosecuting.

"He was initially confused but then the adrenalin kicked in and there was a scuffle at the top of the stairs, with the defendant still hitting Mr Glass on the head with the axe," Mr Searle told Stafford Crown Court.

Unconscious

The victim managed to push Parkes away and the defendant fell downstairs. For a brief while he lay unconscious at the bottom of the staircase, with the axe embedded in a radiator.

The householder tried to call the police, the court heard, but he was prevented by blood from his wounds running into his eyes, and the defendant was able to escape.

Mr Glass eventually raised the alarm on the telephone landline. When paramedics arrived he was taken to hospital where he received stitches to several cuts on his head and neck. The court heard there was also £550 damage to the house.

Parkes was picked up by police three days later in a nearby garden. He had left behind at the scene a hat which had his DNA on it, said Mr Searle.

Parkes, of Rolfe Street, Smethwick, pleaded guilty to burglary and robbery.

Moore time on touchline for Darren

Albion legend Darren Moore was back on the touchline just 24 hours after taking charge of his former club for the first time. It was a busy weekend for Moore who watched from the sidelines as a Baggies legends side took on Stourbridge Old Boys. The game at Stourbridge FC was held to raise money for Mary Stevens Hospice, in memory of local woman Jane Webb. Bob Taylor and Lee Hughes were among former players who turned out for the Albion legends, who won 5-1.

NEWS IN BRIEF

More than 100 nurses join up

MORE than 100 nurse vacancies have been filled at a hospital trust over the last 12 months. The ranks have been bolstered at Sandwell General and City Hospital in Birmingham.

Bosses at the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, which runs the two hospitals, said they had also been able to retain more staff.

It had previously experienced problems trying to hang on to nurses who had been leaving for trusts elsewhere in the country.

Extra nurses on the wards has brought a much-needed boost to the hospitals which struggled to cope with the level of demand over winter.

Appeal over biker racing on estate

POLICE have launched an appeal to trace a biker who was filmed racing around an estate.

The driver raced over a speed bump on the bike, which did not have a registration plate, as he tore around Tibbington Terrace in Tipton after coming from the Owen Street area.

He was accused of 'careless driving' by police who have urged anyone who knows him to contact them. The footage was shot at around 7pm on Saturday April 7.

Tipton Town WMP said on Twitter: "If anyone knows who this might be please contact us!"

Town Hall date for top folk star

THE newly crowned BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards singer of the year is to perform in Birmingham.

Scottish singer Karine Polwart won the award for the first time last week at the ceremony in Belfast.

It was the sixth time she had been among the winners at the awards including twice winning best original song.

The singer, whose last album was A Pocket of Wind Resistance, will be appearing at Birmingham Town Hall during a concert on November 2 with tickets £23.

Shops shut down for diverting electric

BUSINESSES were shut down in Smethwick after allegedly 'abstracting' electricity and gas, said police.

Several premises in Cape Hill were shut after police conducted an operation with electricity and gas crews. It was aimed at clamping down on alleged power supply diversion.

Smethwick Police tweeted: "Officers are checking electricity boxes in retail premises, identifying any safety and trading standards offences."

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COUNTY NEWS

Crafty folk get festival invite

DATES has been announced for this year's Cradley Heath Arts Festival – from June 3 through to June 9.

Organisers are callingsfor artists, performers and craftsmen to exhibit their work and share their skills in workshops.

Before then, an open exhibition wil start at The Art Yard on Reddal Hill Road, Cradley Heath. from May 28 to June 23. Any special works made during the exhibition will be shown in another exhibition from June 25 to 30

For more information, call Martyn on 07954 306223, email martynharris8@gmail.com or call Fran on 07952 563725 by May 25.

11pc in region are planning business

MORE than one in 10 people in the West Midlands have plans to open a small business according to a survey by Axa Business Insurance.

The 11 per cent for the region compares to 13 per cent nationally which Axa says amounts to seven million latent entrepreneurs, who have advanced plans for a business but are being held back from launching.

The national survey of 8,500 saw 19 per cent in London say they have plans for a business.

The biggest untapped source of business activity is among the under 25's, where 27 per cent have a business idea and wish to start it.

Charity honoured for its team spirit

MIDLANDS Air Ambulance has won an award demonstrating its commitment to investing in local people. The Investors in People and Investors in Volunteers accolade was handed out at a recent review at the charity's headquarters in Stourbridge, and the West Bromwich charity shop.

Employees and volunteers were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences with Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, and the reports noted a clear team spirit and enthusiasm.

Young chefs told to give peas a chance

YOUNG chefs in the Midlands are being invited to enter their recipe creations for the chance to be crowned Young Pea Chef of the Year.

Run by the Yes Peas! campaign and the Ocado Foundation, three winners will receive £500 towards a grow-your-own school project and there's a top prize of a personalised cooking hamper worth £50. Log on at https://youngpeachef.co.uk/ for details.

Borough drug deaths lowest in region

SANDWELL has the lowest rates of deaths linked to heroin and morphine than anywhere else in the West Midlands.

The borough had just six deaths linked to the drugs in two years – 0.6 per 100,000 population.

The area with the highest rate in the West Midlands is Walsall, at 2.5, followed by Dudley, 2.2, and Birmingham, 2.

Councillor Peter Hughes, who is the chairman of budget and corporate scrutiny at the council, welcomed the figures from the Office of National Statistics.

He said: "We the drop in public health funding we have to make our money go further, and so when it comes to recovery services we aim for the best.

"The service looks at the borough on a town-by-town basis and requires workers to stretch out their work.

"It is pleasing to see such low numbers of drug-related deaths."

The figures also revealed the total number of people to die from drug abuse in the borough.

This fell from from 18 in 2004-06 to 16 in 2014-16, while the number rose in other boroughs.

Earlier this year, a newly-merged alcohol and drug service was launched in Sandwell, funded by the borough council.

Run by Cranstoun Sandwell, it offers treatment and recovery services partly through a 'self-help approach'.

Peter Glass, director of operations for Cranstoun, said: "We will keep developing our partnership approach and build on the already excellent relationships we have in Sandwell."

Nightmare A&E waits for 3,377 in hospital

By Jamie Brassington

THOUSANDS of hospital patients in Sandwell had to wait more than four hours to be seen in A&E during one month, new figures reveal.

The statistics released by Sandwell's NHS Trust show 3,377 patients in February endured waits of more than fours, which is the national target for hospitals to meet.

Trust chiefs apologised for the delays but said: "Every effort is being taken to meet the national emergency care quality standard."

But a Sandwell councillor who is a member of a health scrutiny committee blamed the impact of NHS spending cuts for the delays.

A hospital report, released by Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, said 79.82 per cent of patients were seen in four hours, below the trust's target to see 90 per cent of patients in four hours.

Chief operating officer Rachel Barlow said: "We are sorry that patients have waited longer than we would want to receive a diagnosis, discharge or admission. All patients are clinically assessed within minutes to reaching us, and are then treated in priority order based on clinical need.

"We now have the ability to help patients see a GP if that is more suitable for their needs after assessment. We are working hard to support staff to be able to see patients safely faster, investing in the best equipment, and in staff development to retain skills in our teams."

Another trust in the Black Country also failed to meet the four hour target for A&E waiting times. At Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley, 2,498 patients had to wait more than four hours bringing the overall amount to 68 per cent.

Midland Met delays could hit services

Behind schedule – The Midland Metropolitan Hospital being built in Cranford Street, Smethwick

HEALTH chiefs have warned that patients could face disruption if a project to build a super-hospital continues to fall behind deadline.

The construction of the Midland Met Hospital in Smethwick ground to a halt following the collapse of Carillion in January – sparking fears it will still not be ready by early-2020. The hospital was originally meant to be finished by October this year – with some services at Sandwell General and Birmingham downgraded in anticipation of their move to the new hospital.

Toby Lewis, chief executive of Sandwell's NHS Trust, said the delay may mean patients could be affected.

Mr Lewis said: "Can we guarantee that we will keep all services the same until Midland Met opens? The answer is I can't guarantee that. If the Midland Met opens in 2019/20 then that would be our expectation.

"However, if for any reason – and that would be highly regrettable – that Midland Met is delayed beyond the early part of 2020, we will need to look at relocating some services between the sites."

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust chiefs are concerned that Sandwell General, in West Bromwich, and Birmingham City, cannot continue operating at current levels.

Christening descended into 'wild west brawl'

A CHRISTENING celebration descended into 'a scene from a wild west bar brawl' after a drunken customer started an argument with one of the guests, a court heard.

The gathering at a Walsall pub, in 2016, descended into mayhem with punches being thrown and chairs being hurled – with almost £1,000 damage caused.

CCTV footage of the disturbance was played to Stafford Crown Court, showing men brawling across the function room of The Queen's Head in Church Street, Bloxwich, as women and children scattered.

Mr Rupert Jones, prosecuting, said 30-year-old Thomas Keenan was seen staggering around the main bar before trying to get into the function room and was asked to leave.

An argument with one of the christening party started in the doorway, said Mr Jones. As the situation deteriorated, chairs were picked up and used as weapons. Keenan and two family members were arrested after being identified on pub CCTV footage.

The licensee told police: "I couldn't believe the violence used, especially with families present. It was like a scene from a wild west bar brawl."

Thomas Keenan, of Harden Road, Walsall, along with Michael Keenan, aged 27, of Chestnut Road, Walsall, and John Keenan, 28, of Broadmeadow Green, Bilston, all pleaded guilty to a charge of affray. They were each given six-month prison sentences suspended for 18 months and ordered to carry out 150 hours unpaid work in the community. All three were also ordered to pay £300 compensation each to the landlord of the pub.

Call to ensure all dogs are on lead

DOG owners across the Black Country are being urged to keep their pooches on leads.

National charity Guide Dogs has launched its 'Take the Lead' campaign, calling on owners to keep their pets on a lead when a guide dog is nearby.

Seven guide dog attacks were reported in the Shrewsbury, Staffordshire and Black Country area last year, the charity said.

Guide Dogs researcher Rachel Moxon said: "Guide dogs are life-changing for those living with sight loss, helping their owners live life to the full.

"Attacks on our dogs destroy confidence and can mean a guide dog owner once again loses their freedom and independence."

Fly-tippers under fire as they are hit in pocket

A COUNCILLOR has blasted fly-tippers, as the authority continues to crack down on dumping rubbish.

Sandwell Council have been issuing £400 fixed penalty notices to fly-tippers since May 2017.

More than 50 fines have been issued in the town after a new enforcement team started patrols. Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways and environment, said: "I wish we could have one thousand pound fines – it's just horrible to see.

"It just shows the ignorance and selfishness of people that they have dumped this rubbish without thought for other people." Seven fines were issued last week, taking the total number issued so far to 55.

The fines are part of Sandwell Council's ongoing crackdown on fly-tippers, which includes a mix of enforcement, education and CCTV in hotspots. Councillor Hosell estimated the cost to council taxpayers to be in the thousands. He said: "There's a cost to removing everything and it ends up coming out of people's council tax, which could have been spent on other things."

One fly-tipper recently received two fines – for dumping rubbish in Dudley Road, Rowley Regis, and in Canalside Close, Wednesbury. Elsewhere a fly-tipper was caught on CCTV dumping a mattress from a van in Beaconview Road, West Bromwich, while cameras caught another person dumping a builder's bag in Crabtree Close, West Bromwich.

There was also bags dumped on a car park in Dudley Port, in Tipton, bags of household waste dumped in a car park in Handley Street, Wednesbury, and bags fly-tipped in Forge Lane, in West Bromwich.

"The shame of it doesn't seem to bother people," said Mr Hosell.

£1k donation for bereaved fathers

A HOUSEBUILDER has donated £1,000 to help a bereavement charity set up to support fathers who have suffered the death of a child.

Persimmon Homes West Midlands, based in Wolverhampton, donated the money to Stafford's A Child of Mine through its Community Champions scheme.

The builder chose the group to benefit from its monthly match-funded donation.

The charity, based in Eastgate Street, supports bereaved parents through counselling, advice and support groups.

They also advise nurses at local hospitals, including Birmingham Children's Hospital, on how to support grieving parents.

Adrian takes seat as academy principal

Adrian Price

THE new principal of a Sandwell school has said he will ensure the academy goes "from strength to strength".

Adrian Price will take up the position of principal of George Salter Academy, in West Bromwich, sponsored by Ormiston Academies Trust (OAT), following the Easter break.

He joins the school from Tenbury High Ormiston Academy, in Tenbury Wells, also run by OAT, and will be continuing the leadership of Pank Patel, who retired at the end of term.

Last summer, students at George Salter Academy, also rated 'Good' by Ofsted, achieved strong results at both GCSE and A-level. Mr Price said: "I am excited to be joining the fantastic team at George Salter and to be staying in the OAT family.

"I'm looking forward to working closely with staff, students, parents and the whole school community to build on the academy's success and to ensure that it goes from strength to strength."

Tony Greenwood, chair of governors at George Salter Academy, said: "We are delighted that Adrian Price will be our new principal from April.

"Adrian shares our values and vision for George Salter – we are clear that he is the right appointment for the role to continue to drive improvement at our academy and build on the considerable achievements of his predecessor."

Robert Pritchard, regional director west for Ormiston Academies Trust, added: "This is a fantastic appointment for George Salter – Adrian's work at Tenbury High Ormiston Academy speaks for itself, and I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with Adrian as part of the Ormiston West family of academies.

"I would also like to thank retiring principal Pank Patel for all his hard work and dedication."

Head injury proved fatal after man was dragged

A 22-year-old man died of a traumatic head injury after being dragged alongside a van in West Bromwich, an inquest heard.

Mohammed Miah, from Tipton, was spotted on CCTV having an 'ordinary' conversation with two men in a van in George Street, West Bromwich on March 17 this year – until tragedy struck.

An inquest held at Black Country Coroners Court heard that the young former factory worker's backpack strap was suddenly 'grabbed' and pulled inside the parked-up vehicle. The van then started moving at speed, pulling onto High Street, before Mohammed fell and suffered a severe head injury which resulted in his death.

Det Insp Nigel 'Harry' Harrison said the young man, who had lost his job just weeks before his death, was 'clamped' against the driver's side of the vehicle when it started moving.

Robbery

He died in the early hours of March 17, at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, shortly after the incident.

The detective said police were 'exploring' the idea of attempted robbery, but believed Mohammed did not know the men in the van.

The road was cordoned off for more than 12 hours on the day of the incident while forensic officers carried out an extensive examination of the area.

Mohammed's family, who were at the inquest on Thursday, have described their son as someone who was "always smiling" and "always laughing".

Senior coroner Zafar Siddique offered his 'deepest condolences' to Mohammed's family.

Paul Emmerson, aged 38, of Kemp Road, Kitts Green and Hardeep Singh Bagdi, aged 42, of Wareing Drive in Erdington have both been charged with murder in connection with the incident.

The inquest was suspended due to the ongoing criminal trial with the next court hearing due to take place at Birmingham Crown on April 27. A trial will then be on August 20.

Campaign to save old control tower

The old control tower and terminal, which dates from 1939

CAMPAIGNERS hope to save Birmingham Airport's distinctive original terminal and control tower building from being bulldozed.

The art deco building, familiar to generations of Midlanders who have flown from the former Elmdon Airport, was last used by the public in 1984 when a new terminal building opened to deal with ever-growing numbers of passengers. A campaign to preserve the old flight hub, which originally opened in 1939, includes a petition on change.org calling for its restoration and new use as either a museum, hotel or restaurant.

The building has still been used as offices for the airport until its recent closure and has since suffered flooding.

Already more than 3,500 people have signed the petition at https://www.change.org/p/birmingham-airport-save-the-original-elmdon-terminal-building-at-birmingham-airport

NEWS IN BRIEF

Jasper's back after heart op

JASPER Carrott is going back on tour after undergoing a quadruple heart bypass. The Brummie comedian has confirmed he is going back on the road. The 73-year-old was forced to cancel his sell-out shows last year after falling ill. He said on Facebook: "I'm back on the road with my mates.

"Sorry for all the trouble – I'm really looking forward to seeing you."

His daughter Lucy Davis, the former star of The Office, told her Instagram followers: "Dad's back on tour after his quad bypass last year. Proud of him." The veteran comic had surgery at Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital last August.

Women deny fraud charge on tobacco

TWO women have denied involvement in an alleged tobacco fraud during which it is claimed £352,000 duty was evaded through sales of cigarettes on Facebook.

Hazell Lumbley, aged 37, and 20-year-old Hayley Eaton, both of Darlaston Road, Wednesbury, each pleaded not guilty at Wolverhampton Crown Court to fraudulent evasion of duty on tobacco goods, starting from January 1, 2013.

The two women were remanded on bail and are scheduled to stand trial at the same court in October.

Ride on target for children's hospital

BIRMINGHAM Children's Hospital is inviting the public to take part in a London to Paris bike ride.

The ride is taking place from September 5 to 9 and it is the second time it has been held.

The money will be raised for the hospital.

Participants will cycle 300 miles over four days.

The journey will go through both cities and English villages and the French countryside.

For more information, visit visit www.bch.org.uk/Event/london-paris

Machete man flees after crash chaos

ARMED police swarmed a street in the Black Country after a car ploughed into a pedestrian before a machete-wielding suspect fled the scene last Thursday.

A car smashed into parked vehicles in Buffery Road, Dudley, leaving a man with leg injuries. His dog was also hurt. Police said firearms officers were deployed to the scene at 3.25pm yesterday after it was reported a man was seen armed with machetes.

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IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Date at the dentist's? Google can fill in gaps

WHERE were you between 4pm and 5pm on November 1 last year? Most of us would probably struggle to answer that question, unless something memorable happened at that time.

Well I've just discovered I was at the dentist. Which in itself is not big news, but what is worrying is where I have just got that information from.

Now, maybe I'm naive, and I would certainly never profess any expertise in new technology, but it never occurred to me when I got my first smart phone three years ago that the good people at Google would be tracking my movements every minute of the day.

But now, having had my attention drawn to the data file that the technology giant keeps on all of its users, I now know that on November 1, 2017, I arrived at the dentist at 4.09pm, and left 4.51.

Google records also show what time I left for work that morning, what route I took, and what time I arrived. It records that I left work at 3.25pm that day because of my dental appointment, and took a slightly different route back.

And that the return journey was a minute quicker than the one in the morning. Is it just me, or is this a touch sinister?

Let's be a realist. We all know that nobody gives you something for nothing, least of all American internet giants, and I always thought that Mark Zuckenberg was a wrong 'un the moment I saw a picture of him giving an interview in flip-flops. But while most of us knew the likes of Google and Facebook were making money out of us one way or another, did any of us really have any idea of how these companies were stockpiling even the most intimate of personal details in order to build these incredibly detailed profiles of us all?

Our interests, our opinions and attitudes, our health and our movements are all analysed in forensic detail, in order to calculate which types of advertising we are most susceptible too.

If the Government tried to monitor us in this way there would be a revolution. Yet unelected, unaccountable tech giants have been doing it for years without us knowing.

Maybe it's closing the door after the horse has bolted, but perhaps the answer is we should all put entirely spurious and inaccurate information on social media.

But one other question. How come car security companies are still charging £400 to fit a tracker, and £150 a year to monitor it, when Google has been doing it for nothing all the time?

In crises never rush ahead of what evidence tells you

Esther McVey – calling for more kids to do part-time jobs

Dita Von Teese – reveals how hard it is to keep her much-scrutinised skin so pale

Yulia Skripal – the daughter of former Russian double agent Sergei Skripal

Nerve agent case: Lessons to learn

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

AS the Salisbury nerve-agent incident develops, lessons will be learned. The most important point, wisely made from the outset by Jeremy Corbyn, is that in crises such as this you should never rush ahead of what the evidence is telling you. Theresa May was far too hasty to blame the Russian state. Boris Johnson was irresponsible in pinning it on Putin. Can anyone else see this ending with an apology?

WE might also ask where the Daily Star got its theory that Mr Skripal and his daughter "could have been sprayed with the nerve agent from a remote-controlled drone hovering above them as they sat on a bench in Salisbury." This Mission Impossible yarn was attributed to "intelligence sources." Yeah, right.

DITA Von Teese, the doyenne of burlesque performers, has marked her 45th birthday by revealing to the Guardian how hard it is to keep her much-scrutinised skin so pale, living in sunny Los Angeles. A reader responded thus: "Seems like a nice lass. If she really wants to stay pale she should come live with me in east Manchester."

AND talking of dressing up. There is a certain irony in Eddie Izzard being appointed to Labour's national executive as a direct result of the anti-semitism row. While right-on liberals admire Izzard's endless charity work and unwavering commitment to the EU, and smile indulgently at his fondness for frocks and lipstick, did anyone think to ask conservative Jews and Muslims what their religions say about cross-dressing? Thought not.

A CALIFORNIAN teacher who also serves as a reserve police officer was demonstrating gun safety to his class when, well, you can guess what happened next. The gun went off and three students were wounded. It's a reminder that few things are as unpredictable as people and guns.

FOLLOWING this incident a reader, worried by plans to arm US teachers, wonders how long it will be before a maniac deliberately targets a fully-armed school to see how many teachers he can kill before they kill him – a variation on the "suicide by cop" madness.

BUT I suspect the first death-by-teacher killing will be less dramatic. There's nothing like a handgun on your hip for escalating a trivial argument to homicide. Be prepared for a US teacher killing another teacher in a staff-room dispute over who washes the coffee mugs or who's been dallying with whom in the stockroom.

FOR a moment, let's overlook the offence caused to Jews by Jeremy Corbyn choosing to meet one of the very few Jewish organisations that other Jews find repellent. What about the offence Christians might feel at Corbyn mixing with a group whose name sounds the same as the most despised character in the Easter story - Jewdas? It is as crass as dropping in for a snack at the Haddolf Hyttler Bavarian Deli. Corbyn always comes up with some wide-eyed, plausible excuse but why does he keep putting himself in such awkward positions? For his advisers it must be like trying to teach a simple lesson to a particularly truculent child, over and over again. Lest we forget, in a throwaway remark last year, Corbyn said: "I don't consider myself the world's greatest intellectual."

STRANGE how many memories have been stirred by the Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey calling for more kids to do part-time jobs. My first Saturday job was for a couple of workaholic butchers who slogged from 5am to 6pm and made a fortune in the process. They were a hard-bitten pair. Both had served in the infantry during the war and seen all the inhumanity that man could inflict on man. They swore endlessly, insulted the customers and staff alike, and routinely denounced me as an idle little arse. And yet one Saturday morning I saw these hard nuts weeping like babies in the shop as the news came of a terrible accident at a place called Aberfan. You never forget the first time you see men cry.

ONE of the things the ever-whingeing millennial generation fails to grasp is how hard-up we babyboomers were in years gone by. Everything you needed in life, from food and clothes to washing machines and lawnmowers, was cripplingly expensive. We simply did not possess the quantity or quality of things that people take for granted today. Which is why the final scene in the revived Generation Game (BBC) was a pale imitation of the 1970s original. Back then, people really wanted those prizes. Today, as the contestants acquired their items, you couldn't help feeling that the canteen of cutlery would go straight in the attic and the telescope would be sold on eBay. In a world glutted with consumer goods, who cares about an extra toaster?

TALKING POINT

Queueing dilemma can lead to a frenzy

IT was the dilemma which has plagued polite society for many a year. On entering the foyer during a recent visit to the theatre, we found ourselves at the end of two queues waiting to clear security or, in reality, convince the staff they had nothing of consequence in their bags.

So, it should be a 50-50 choice as to which queue we join . . . or is it? Just at the crucial moment, someone who had come in behind us asked if they could proceed down a third channel, which at first glance either led nowhere or wasn't meant for queueing at all.

"Sure," said the door operative, "you can use all three." So off we toddle, trying not to look at the two obedient queues who must be thinking we are VIP guests or have special tickets for the show.

And after carefully looking straight ahead, for fear of incurring the wrath of the two stationary lines, we fast-tracked ourselves into the main body of the theatre and settled into our seats.

In this case, we made the queueing system work for us, but it's not always like that. Take the bus queue, for instance. Once upon a time, everyone joined the end of the queue.

These days, it's not so straightforward. With sometimes several services pulling in at one stop, a frenzy can overtake even the most patient types, whose main intention is to get on that bus before it leaves without them. Consequently, you will see a throng hovering around the head of the queue waiting to pounce as soon as their bus comes into sight.

The one place you can expect to see disciplined queueing is in a bank. Or at least the one I use. Given four machines in a row, customers are content to form just one queue and file off when an ATM becomes available. In fact that particular discipline must be so deeply ingrained in some of us that the American author Bill Bryson once observed it was what set the English apart from many other countries, where a free-for-all mentality reigns or people are expected to "stay in lane" once they have chosen their queue.

While not quite a national obsession anymore, queueing has given rise to a phrase which we use without thinking. How often, on hearing someone announce their intention to be the next to do something, have you said (or been tempted to say) "Oi, join the queue."

And what of our evening at the theatre? The show ended on a high note, with the audience in equally high spirits, which may explain the rush to leave the building . . . to get to the front of the taxi queue, of course.

STEVE PARLETT

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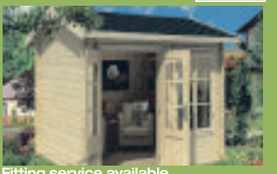
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Gibraltar link confusing issue

WE'VE known for some time that the Northern Ireland border is going to prove difficult to resolve to everyone's satisfaction.

Lately, those vindictive little Eurocrats have decided to complicate matters further by trying to link Gibraltar as a similar problem to be resolved to the satisfaction of Spain!

What nobody ever mentions is that Spain has not one but two similar territory possessions on the coast of Morocco, namely Ceuta and Melilla, directly across the Med from Gibraltar. They were, and may still be, very popular duty free shopping destinations for the Spanish, especially at Christmas and New Year.

I wonder if anyone from our negotiating team will be brave enough to bring this to the attention of their opposite number across the table.

They've already made excessive concessions regarding our fish stocks so it's time to dig in and stand firm.

CLIVE FORD
Walsall

Example set by Smith

I BELIEVE that Steve Smith in his admission of guilt in the ball tampering episode has set an example for all of us to follow. I hope that he is rewarded for this with an early return to captaincy. How I wish Brexiters could display the same courage.

There is not a grain of evidence to show that Brexit will improve either our economy or our influence in the world yet Leavers still stay put, even though they have seen their boat is full of holes.

The real deal is shown in your recent poll which, here in the heart of Brexit-loving country, shows 63 per cent are less optimistic about our future and only 37 per cent more optimistic.

ROGER WATTS
Walsall

Nightclub culture is to blame

I WAS astounded to see West Midlands Police making efforts to make Walsall safe, page 2 of the Express & Star on April 2.

Really? I wondered who was being made safe?

Your news-spread clearly highlights that nightclub owners are very happy about this and that knife crime and drugs feature strongly in the need for police to make the town centre safe.

But what about the ordinary people going about their visits into town, when confronted with issues such as dangerous driving in pedestrian and prohibited areas?

No police flooding out going on here.

If it were not for nightclubs attracting the riotous behaviour in the first place, then there wouldn't be a problem – why should the police appease them?

Clearly West Midlands Police support the attraction of criminals to these nightmare establishments.

JOHN WALTON
Walsall

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Walsall Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
graeme.andrew@expressandstar.co.uk

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Brexit result no reason for second referendum

IN reply to Roger Watts' letter (March 14) calling for a second referendum. Just because you didn't like the result is no justification for a 're-run'. People knew exactly what they were voting for. I have not yet spoken to one person who voted leave who regrets it.

Mr Watts states that only 37 per cent of those entitled to vote voted leave. Correct and that 37 is greater than the people entitled to vote who voted to remain. In fact in the referendum over two million more people voted to leave than remain. In a binary system that is a lot of votes. Note in the referendum far more people voted than at the last general election.

He also mentions misleading information paraded as fact. I seem to remember that key remainers stated a vote to leave would see the beginnings of a collapse in the economy necessitating an emergency budget. Deliberate scaremongering that fortunately didn't work.

KEITH BATE
Wolverhampton

MPs' eyes on ball over fuel

IT'S so nice to see that our MPs are keeping their eye on the ball, not much is getting past them.

Now they have discovered that petrol stations are ripping us off at motorway service areas!

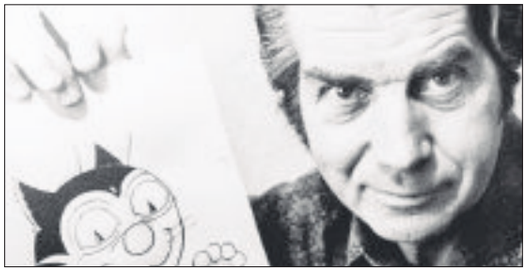
Can I just say that any motorist could have told these MPs the same thing anytime in the last 30 to 40 years!

Just in case another 30 to 40 years go by we are also being ripped off with council tax, electric, gas, water, train fares, car tax, car and home insurance, interest rates, food, HS2, to name but a few.

PETE LOWE
Brierley Hill

Sandwell Council arts officer, Alex Howell with part of the exhibition

One of the saucy postcards on display



Charlie seen with a picture of Korky the Cat, which he drew for the Dandy

A whole host of character ideas in the exhibition

Charlie's Desperate Dan artwork

Some of the cartoonist's sketches for postcard characters

Artist's work is just Dandy

IT was the opening day of an exhibition celebrating the life and work of a famous illustrator.

And it has unearthed some of the never before seen intimate and telling pieces of Sandwell-born cartoonist Charlie 'Chas' Grigg including handwritten notes and unpublished drawings.

Visitors flocked to Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery for the opening of exhibition yesterday – which will look to honour the cartoonist known as the man behind The Beano and The Dandy.

The show will give those attending the chance to see artefacts, original drawings, letters, unseen and unpublished images, and video interviews with Charlie who lived in the Rood End area of Langley as a young boy.

Museum service manager Jane Hanney said: "Lots of local people have expressed an interest and they did not know he was a local person. I think we will get lots of people that read The Beano and The Dandy when they were younger – it is a good opportunity for them to come along and see the works.

"There are things in here that were never published because he was a freelance cartoonist at one time. There is some really nice stuff that has come from his son who is keen to get the story told.

"We have got his desk on display that he used to do all the drawings on. We are hoping to get lots of people come through who are not necessarily into traditional artwork.

"We want to do lots of projects around the exhibition with schools and locals looking into cartooning and illustrating. The hope is it will put the museum on the map."

The exhibition, which runs through until November 2018, will later tour in a smaller form around local libraries. It will be open at Wednesbury Museum and Art Gallery on Wednesday and Thursdays from 11am-4pm and on Saturdays from 2-5pm – with last entry at 30 minutes before closing.

During the exhibition run, there will be many other events, such as the launch of the book Our Best Kept Secret written by Billy Spakemon, otherwise known as Dr Brian Dakin, which tells the story of Charlie's life as well as the project itself.

Thousands are involved in sport sessions

A SMETHWICK community partnership is celebrating after notching up 25,000 participants over the past two years.

The record amount has seen youngsters involved in sport with the Benson Community Project and Sandwell Leisure Trust (SLT) at Hadley Stadium on Wilson Road.

The partnership hosts regular and free football and multi-sport sessions for disadvantaged youngsters and increasing participation levels have seen the weekly number of sessions jump from one to four to meet demand and interest.

Ian King, SLT's assistant manager at Hadley Stadium, said: "The take-up has been incredible, all by word-of-mouth and personal referral. Nobody could have expected the results that this initial Tuesday session has seen, which led to additional football sessions on Thursday and Saturday afternoon (now for ages 5-18) as well as an indoor multi-sports family-orientated session on a Wednesday – and consequently 25,000+ local people seeing, feeling, experiencing and enjoying the benefits."

Benson's Manager, Paul Landucci said: "Hadley's 3G pitch is perfect for us and since we started here I can count on one hand the number of times that only the heaviest snow and ice has defeated us."

Fitness fanatics are powering up

IT is the biggest indoor fitness expedition in the world and attracts athletes, competitors and fans from all around the globe.

And now BodyPower will return to Birmingham's NEC to mark its 10th anniversary and see the fitness community rally together under one roof once more.

Tickets to the event, which runs between May 11 and May 13, cost anywhere from £29.95 to £249.95 depending on the package.

To book visit www.bodypower.com/tickets or call the venue on 0121 7804141.

Dumped canal dog finds a new home

The dog with firefighters after being rescued by firefighters. Credit: @Oldburyfire

AN abandoned dog which was found wondering over a frozen Black Country canal during Arctic conditions has been given a new home. Firefighters had to rescue the dog, thought to be an Akita breed, after the alarm was raised by a concerned member of the public.

Watch commander Adam Joyce, of Oldbury Fire Station, suspected the 'old boy' might have been 'kicked out' by his owners. But it has been a happy ending after the canine was found a new home. After being rescued, he was taken to vets who checked him over before he was taken to kennels. From there he was spotted by his new owners.

Firefighters were told of the good news by K9 Search UK.

Commander Joyce said: "He looked quite nervous and distressed but he has got a big coat. He is like a bear." The dog – who was not micro-chipped – was found wandering over the frozen waters of the Birmingham Canal next to Hainge Road in Tividale on March 2.

Drugs link to suspect's death while in custody

A SUSPECT who died while locked in a police cell suffered a drug-related death, an inquest has ruled.

By Annabal Bagdi

Unemployed Christopher Morgan fell from his bunk and onto the floor while sleeping in a cell at Oldbury custody suite. He was discovered 'unresponsive' by a police officer conducting regular patrols on the wing.

However, resuscitation attempts failed to revive him on September 21 last year. Jurors at Black Country Coroner's Court deliberated for just under one hour and 30 minutes before recording a conclusion of drug-related death on Wednesday.

During the two-day inquest, jurors heard Mr Morgan was arrested in Wolverhampton on suspicion of theft and possession of class A drugs and taken to the Bromford Road suite.

The suspect, of Slaney Road, Walsall, was alleged to have stolen items from a pound store and was found with cocaine when detained.

He was initially placed on 30-minute observations but officers were later told to check on him every hour after a medical assessment. Mr Morgan was later charged and remanded into police custody to appear before magistrates but refused to move to a different cell block with other suspects waiting to go to court.

Pathologist Dr Alexander Kolar revealed the medical cause of death was coronary artery atheroma – heart disease – influenced by cocaine usage.

He told jurors he spotted 10 injuries on Mr Morgan's body but said these were not as a result of his time in custody.

Mr Morgan, who used cocaine and heroin daily, also suffered a fractured ribcage caused by attempts to resuscitate him.

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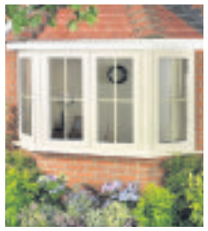

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Reeha in a league of her own with poetry contest

A SCHOOLGIRL has scored the prize of being crowned a writing champion by the Premier League.

Reeha, aged 10, from Galton Valley Primary in Smethwick, was named the West Midlands regional winner of the league's Writing Stars competition.

Her poem Just Believe In Me won the Key Stage 2 age group, for children between seven and 11, by an all-star judging panel including Frank Lampard OBE and Yannick Bolasie.

Fellow judge Caleb Femi – the young people's laureate for London – said: "Congratulations Reeha on becoming the West Midlands regional winner.

"I've really felt your poem on a personal level and it was really emotional for me to read that poem and I felt that I could feel a strong sense of resilience, a strong sense of personal assurance and understanding of who you are.

Inspired

"It really inspired me and motivated me and it's something that I think the whole country should be aware of and should read. I just want to encourage you to continue writing and continue telling your story, thank you very much."

More than 25,000 children from England and Wales entered the competition with their own original poetry submissions

From the 25,200 poems received, nine regional winners and one national winner have been selected across Key Stage 1 and 2.

Poems were judged on their originality, effect, tone and message.

The winning poems will now be published in a special Writing Stars book due to be released later this year.

Other prizes include author-led writing workshops and Premier League trophy school visits, as well as winning poems being read aloud by football stars.

Premier League Writing Stars launched in September 2017 for children aged five to 11 with the aim of encouraging them to try their hand at creative writing.

Frank Lampard, who has authored 19 books in his Frankie's Magic Football series, said: "It's been very tough to pick winners out of more than 25,000 entries. It's been a great experience for me trying to read through the lot of them and find winners when it's such a high standard."

Reeha awarded by Lee Meacham of the West Bromwich Albion Foundation

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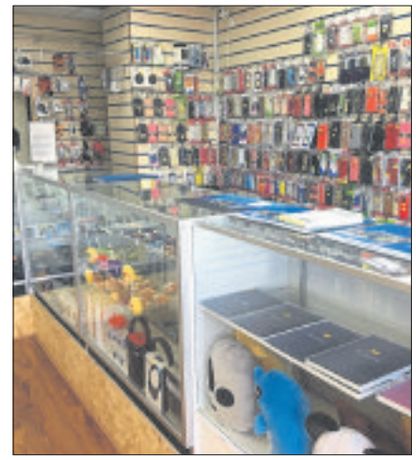

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Albion anger at rejection of standing

ALBION have described the Government's decision to reject their safe standing application as 'short-sighted'.

The Baggies applied to install 3,600 railed seats in the top tier of the Smethwick End this summer ahead of next season.

Mark Miles

But their efforts have been rejected by Minister for Sport, Tracey Crouch, who confirmed there are no plans to change the all-seater policy in the top two tiers of English football introduced in 1992.

"I'm very disappointed," said operations director Mark Miles. "Football is a very different place to what it was in 1992.

"We have large numbers of supporters home and away which choose to persistently stand in seated areas.

"As a club we've worked to manage those people who stand as best we can. We're not introducing standing into the stadium, the standing is already taking place, we're just trying to manage it better.

"Railed seats have a number of benefits. At the moment, if you stand you have 29cm taken up by the seats, so you only have 40cm to stand in.

"The new system only takes up 5cm, so you have so much more space to stand.

"It stops people blocking up gangways, making it easier for police, stewards and paramedics to get in.

"On Saturday the whole of the Swansea end were stood up, I bet some of them wanted to sit.

"Some people can't stand for two hours. Some people need or want to stand. There would have been a choice for fans."

Tower cranes arrive on site for next phase of Paradise

Bird's eye view from one of the cranes across the Paradise Birmingham site

CGI showing the view of Paradise Birmingham and Two Chamberlain Square

The installation of the new cranes

TWO new tower cranes are taking their place on Birmingham's skyline as the next construction phase of the Paradise redevelopment swings into action.

Report by Simon Penfold

The second building at Paradise, Two Chamberlain Square, is currently having a pair of tower cranes installed on site to help it towards completion in 2019.

It is an eight storey, 183,000 sq ft building that will have restaurant, bar and retail spaces at ground level and aims to offer a 'stunning' workplace location when it is completed later in 2019. It will complete the first phase of Paradise Birmingham that also includes the 172,000 sq ft One Chamberlain Square that is fully let to international professional services firm PwC and is due for hand-over to the firm next year.

BAM Construction is undertaking the construction of Two Chamberlain Square and will oversee a team of over 200 construction workers. The two basement levels have already been created as part of the site enabling works and therefore the full frame of the new building will quickly become visible.

BAM has also taken over completion of One Chamberlain Square after work was brought to a halt by the collapse of Wolverhampton-based contractor Carillion.

Tower Crane 4, which can already be seen towering over the city centre, is one of the largest operating in Birmingham at 80 metres (260ft) in height, equivalent to 20 double-decker buses, and with ballast weight of 32 tonnes – the equivalent of six and a half fully grown African bush elephants. Tower Crane 3 will be smaller at 50 metres (164ft) in height, or the equivalent of 12 double decker buses, with a ballast of 26 tonnes.

Overlooking the Grade 1 listed Town Hall, Victorian Council House and Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Two Chamberlain Square sits at the heart of Paradise with direct access from the newly improved Chamberlain Square and surrounding public area.

Designed by Birmingham-based Glenn Howells Architects, Two Chamberlain Square features large open floorplates of approximately 24,000 sq ft as well as 16,000 sq ft of retail space at ground level. It also features a panoramic terrace on the sixth floor giving astounding views across to the Grade II listed Museum & Art Gallery and Council House and the Grade I listed Town Hall.

Rob Groves, regional director of Argent, development managers for Paradise, said: "The arrival of the two new tower cranes demonstrates in a very obvious way the gathering momentum around Paradise Birmingham."

The vision for Paradise, and a live time-lapse camera, can be viewed at www.paradisebirmingham.co.uk.

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Gymnast Dominick strikes gold in games

Dominick Cunningham seen during his routine on the pommel horse as team England took gold

WITH professional balance and composure, gymnast Dominick Cunningham swings over a pommel horse helping England on their way to land gold at the Commonwealth Games in Australia.

The former Halesowen-based athlete, who now trains in Birmingham, impressed judges alongside his team-mates as they came first in the men's gymnastic team event Down Under at the Gold Coast.

The 22-year-old took to Twitter to celebrate England's gold medal and praising their performance.

He used to train at Earls Gymnastics Club in Furnace Lane, Halesowen. Now he is based at City of Birmingham Gymnastics Club.

Phil Barrow, the head coach at the club, said: "Dominick has done extremely well. We are proud of his achievement and Dominick and his personal coach Lee Woolls have worked extremely hard."

Big drop in number of Metro passengers

THE Midland Metro has suffered a drop in passenger numbers, with usage down a fifth on Sundays according to new figures.

Overall, the network saw a nine per cent fall in January, compared to the same month last year. But weekend travel has been worst hit, with Saturday passenger numbers down 18 per cent and Sunday 20 per cent.

Bosses say custom has been impacted by the replacement track works in Bilston Road, which were completed in December.

The project lasted six months and meant the operating line could only go as far as Priestfield Metro Stop, not to the city centre's St George's stop. The figures form part of a Metro Operations Business Report to go before a meeting of the West Midlands Combined Authority on Monday.

It shows passenger numbers were at 597,326 in January, compared to 653,035 the year before. Across the year, February last year to January, the service was down one per cent in custom from the same period the year before.

Report by Alex Ross

While weekend usage across the year also fell five per cent on Saturdays and three per cent on Sundays.

The report said: "Following the closure of Bilston Road in June 2017 patronage decreased but since reopening in December 2017 has started to recover."

A spokesman added: "People get used to alternative modes of travel so it can take a bit of time to get back to where it was before.

"Overall though the figures are as we expected and we expect this to improve in the coming months."

The report also revealed punctuality, while improving since June last year, had worsened in December and January.

Stun gun drunk is jailed for five years

A DRUNK seen firing a stun gun at another man during a street brawl has been jailed for five years.

Luke Lowe had been ejected from the Bear Tavern in Bearwood Road, Smethwick because of his behaviour, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

The 29-year-old was then spotted in a struggle with another man during which he took something from his pocket which emitted blue sparks, prompting an eye witness to alert police during the early hours of December 24 last year.

Lowe saw the officers arriving at the scene and made a run for it but fell over as they gave chase, explained Mr Neil Ahuja, prosecuting.

A stun gun, disguised as a torch, was found at the scene, the court heard. Mr Ahuja continued: "The gun fired when later tested and the defendant admitted he had been in an altercation after going to defend his father."

Lowe from Orfield Crescent, Smethwick admitted possession of a prohibited disguised weapon, an offence that carries a minimum prison sentence of five years. Judge Nicholas Webb said: "Whether or not you deserve to go to prison for five years is not within my authority to do anything about because it is a fixed term."

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On the left – a delivery to Lyons Tearoom

The Man on the 'Oss' and the fire department ladders

Instantly recognisable, but totally changed

Trolley bus wires and the 'hidden' toilets

Queen Square: It's same but different

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

THE more things change the more they remain the same.

Photographs of Queen Square over the last century are immediately recognisable as most of the fundamentals are still there, and yet close examination reveals many of the fondly-remembered features have long gone.

Perhaps most famously the subterranean toilets guarded by the 'Man on the 'Oss', the statue of Prince Albert, unveiled by Queen Victoria in 1866, the event which led to the name of Wolverhampton's central hub being changed from High Green to Queen Square.

Shape

The statue replaced the Russian cannon, captured during the Crimean War, perhaps not so well remembered, nor even the set of ladders usually sited there for use by the Fire Department.

The tear-dropped shaped central island changed shape several times to accommodate different traffic flows and aesthetics, and has now disappeared altogether, as has the small island at the top of Victoria Street/Darlington Street, which many years ago used to be a building. At the bottom of the square used to be the Empire Palace/Hippodrome Theatre, the site later becoming a furniture store and is now Yates Wine Lodge.

Opposite was the entrance to the much-loved Queen's Arcade, and at the top of the Square was the Queen's Cinema, one of the town's earliest which became the Queen's Ballroom and tearoom in 1959 and has now been demolished and replaced by Lloyds Bank.

Many of the buildings have remained the same, if with different tenants, and only the street furniture in front of them has altered, often to accommodate different forms of public transport, like the tramlines which were laid at the start of the 20th Century, later replaced by the overhead wires of the trolley buses, which were taken away in the 1960s as motor buses took over.

One thing which is not apparent though, Are the Victorian toilets still there, a lost underground time-capsule? Now that is one to ponder.

The entrance to Queens Arcade

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WOLVERHAMPTON MAGAZINE

Taxi team praised for their efforts

From left, Paul Arnold, Martyn Davidson, with Ch Supt David Sturman, Stephen Beresford and Stephen Potter

SANDWELL Council's taxi licensing team has picked up an award from West Midlands Police.

The award from Ch Supt David Sturman, Commander of West Midlands Police's Operations department, praised the team for their role in preventing child sexual exploitation, fraud and traffic offences.

The team were praised for enforcing laws and regulations among Sandwell's 1,500 registered taxi drivers, as well as helping detect, suspend or ban poor drivers.

The award also thanked the team for supporting the force's camera enforcement unit and assisting when police officers interview taxi drivers.

Brum's £25m Games fee

BIRMINGHAM shelled out £25 million to become host city for the 2022 Commonwealth Games, it has been revealed.

The city agreed to a £20m hosting fee, plus a £5m grant for development work.

That is nearly £10m more than the original host city, Durban, had offered to the Commonwealth Games Federation. Durban was stripped of the Games last year – paving the way for Birmingham's successful bid. The South African bid had failed to meet the deadlines to pay any instalments of the £10.5m they were supposed to pay to host the event.

Birmingham paid a first instalment of £4m almost immediately after they were awarded the Commonwealth Games last December. That payment left them with £2.1m reserves in the bank. Commonwealth Games chief operating officer Darren Hall told a meeting held at the current Games host in the Gold Coast the organisation's 'cash flow challenges were severely advanced'.

Meanwhile, rehearsals are under way for more than 2,000 young people from across the region. They will take part in the ceremony which will mark the end of the Gold Coast games.

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Priya's priority to ensure bookings are not wasted

CARING Priya Chaunkria manages one of the busiest departments at a Black Country hospital Trust – helping on average 300 patients a day.

As a team leader for the Patient Access Team at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, Priya ensures that the booking system is run like clockwork.

"My team manages all outpatient bookings and appointments that have been cancelled by patients," she explained. "We have to work quickly to ensure those slots are filled. It's a fast-paced environment and we face different challenges every day.

"If a patient cancels their appointment on the day, we do our best to fill that appointment quickly so another patient can still be seen and treated. It means that patients get the right care at the right time."

Slogan

Priya, aged 27, who is based at Sandwell Hospital, is also part of the new Postage Project being introduced at the Trust, which will enable patients to be contacted by email – and she even came up with the slogan for the initiative: Let's see the future today.

"The Postage Project is all about going forward by using technology that we already have," she said. "We want to act quickly and speed up the booking and cancellation process, and by contacting patients by email, we will achieve this.

"Once the patients have agreed to this, it will be easier for them to change, reschedule and cancel their appointments. For many, email is a normal part of daily life and it is natural that our patients who are online will want to be able to receive correspondence from us in this way.

"Obviously there are groups of people who wouldn't use email, and for them, we will continue to send out their correspondence by post. The project is one of many which the Trust is carrying out to become paper-light."

Priya, from Wolverhampton, was just 17 when she started her career in the NHS.

She recalled: "I took a temporary job with the Trust as appointment booking clerk based in the medical records department. I was only supposed to be there for three months. But afterwards, the department offered me a permanent role, and I have never looked back since.

"Working for the NHS is probably the best thing that I have done. I enjoy helping people and I really care how I could make things easier for our patients.

"I am also able to communicate with patients in my mother tongue Punjabi. This helps tremendously as sometimes those people are nervous about contacting the hospital. They are worried they won't be able to speak to someone who understands them."

Priya is quick to name her manager Mark Whitehouse as her very own hero. She explained: "He has been very supportive in my progression here at the Trust and is always there to guide me."

l Patients can find out more about the Postage Project by going to https://www.swbh.nhs.uk/email/ or calling 0121 507 3285.

NHS HEROES

ONCE again we focus some of our time on the quiet heroes of the NHS, from a wide variety of backgrounds doing a wide variety of jobs.

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Nobody ever did storming, gyrating rock goddess like Tina Turner, one of the best-selling artists in history, whose rasping power vocal, tempestuous personal life and sheer survival instinct were just begging to be turned into a rock opera.

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City airport is used by 1.4m in the region

MANCHESTER Airport saw 1.4 million passengers from the West Midlands jet off from there last year.

The UK's third biggest airport has also revealed the most popular long-haul routes chosen by the region's passengers. Top of the routes for people from the region was Orlando, operated by Virgin Atlantic, TUI and Thomas Cook Airlines, followed by New York operated by Virgin, Thomas Cook, United Airlines and Jet2 with Las Vegas, operated by Virgin and Thomas Cook, third.

In recent years the airport has added numerous long-haul routes including Beijing, San Francisco, Muscat, and Hong Kong. Their routes are also bringing hundreds of thousands of international tourists to the West Midlands each year, providing a boost to hotels, restaurants and visitor attractions.

Julian Carr, aviation director for the airport, said: "It is interesting to see the mix of destinations and how they differ from county to county across our vast catchment area."

Vikings invade city's gallery

VIKINGS will be invading Wolverhampton Art Gallery next month,

A Viking Saturday is being held in the Lichfield Street gallery on May 26 from 11am to 2pm.

There will be family-friendly activities including dressing like the fearsome warrior Sweyn Forkbeard.

Youngsters will be able to learn about Viking culture and mythology and take part in Viking -inspired crafts. It costs £2 per child to take part. A new exhibition Viking Heroes is running at the gallery from May 12 to July 8 focusing on real-life figures including Eric Bloodaxe – last Viking King of York and Canute the Great.

Lane is shut off for clean-up of rubbish

FRIDGES, mattresses and discarded clothing – just some of the rubbish dumped in a road near a Black Country beauty spot.

Council bosses in Sandwell said Forge Lane in West Bromwich had to be shut over the weekend for a big clean-up.

The fly-tipping, near Sandwell Valley Country Park, has been described as 'disgusting' by a cabinet member.

A temporary road closure was in place on Sunday for what chiefs described as a 'deep cleanse' to be carried out.

Councillor David Hosell, cabinet member for highways and environment, said: "We are having to close Forge Lane on Sunday to remove rubbish safely. It's absolutely disgusting – it's near one of our most beautiful parks."

Diverted

Forge Lane was closed between 6am and noon for cleaning and to allow rubbish to be cleared from the road.

Traffic was diverted via Park Lane, Holyhead Road, Birmingham Road, The Expressway, All Saints Way and Newton Road.

Access to Sandwell Valley Crematorium was maintained via Newton Road.

A Sandwell Council statement said: "In order to facilitate a deep cleanse – Forge Lane, West Bromwich will be closed on Sunday between 6am and noon."

The move comes after the authority announced more than 50 people have received £400 fixed-penalty notices for fly-tipping in the borough since the council began issuing fines in May.

Across the Black Country, there were 295 fly-tipping prosecutions in 2016-17 and fly-tipping fines in the Midlands totalled £123,318 over the same period.

To report fly-tipping, visit sandwell.gov.uk/flytipping, or call 0121 368 1177.

The dumped rubbish, including mattresses and discarded clothing, in Forge Lane

Tech giant sets up hub in building

A LEADING Japanese electronics company has set up shop in a Black Country office building.

Toshiba has established its TEC UK Imaging Systems in Guardian House, West Bromwich. It means the office block is now fully let.

The deal, brokered by property agent Bond Wolfe, has seen the tech giant take over the entire first floor on a 10-year lease. Don Critchley, Toshiba TEC service director said: "We are delighted to announce the relocation of our UK Service and Support Hub to Guardian House, West Bromwich. Our central location is within close proximity to M5 and M6 junction links for greater accessibility for our visiting customers.

"With West Bromwich being an integral area for the future Commonwealth 2020 games we are excited by the opportunities that this will bring.

"The move will bring new opportunities and the enhanced ambience will help develop the service team in a positive environment." The building was formerly occupied by Challinors Solicitors which collapsed in 2013.

Arty youngster plays a blinder

AN ARTISTIC pupil has won a nationwide prize to create her own bedroom blind thanks to her colourful design. Jaipreet Gill, aged 11, from Walsall, worked on a bold and bright pattern which caught the eye of judges from interior blinds company www.blinds-2go.co.uk

The competition asked pupils to submit a design of their ideal bedroom blind. The winner would have their design recreated handmade.

Jaipreet, who attends Park Hall Junior Academy, scooped a prize of £200 for her school.

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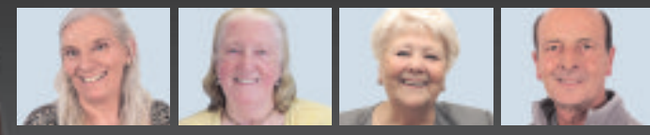

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Happy talk as Captain gets guitar back

Captain Sensible with his guitar

POP star Captain Sensible has been reunited with a beloved guitar that was stolen in Tipton. He launched an online appeal following the loss of his cherry red 2013 Gibson guitar, which had a custom The Damned rod cover.

He revealed that it was taken in town last week.

It had been feared the instrument, which was one of only two of its kind with his modifications, had been lost forever but there was a happy ending for the star, best known for his hit Happy Talk, as he was reunited with the prized guitar.

The Facebook appeal was shared more than 1,500 times as fans helped to try and get it back. And it was later revealed that the guitar had been returned.

Captain Sensible had posted on Facebook: "The bad news is my beloved stage guitar has been stolen. I do have others but not customised and ready to gig like this baby."

The post continued: "This isn't a particularly expensive model, and the surgery required to fit the bridge has probably made it worth a lot less, however there will be a reward for its return."

The star, whose real name is Raymond Burns, rose to fame as a member The Damned in the late 1970s.

£32m revamp under way at business park to bring jobs

A CEREMONY has marked the start of work on a multi-million pound scheme to build new industrial units in Tipton.

Halesowen-based A&H Construction has been appointed by developers CEG to deliver the revamp of Vaughan Park, a £32 million scheme it is hoped will create up to 1,000 jobs.

CEG has secured planning permission from Sandwell Council to build five industrial units totalling 80,000 sq ft. The scheme involves flattening most of the existing buildings on land in Tipton Road, neighbouring the Thomas Dudley foundry and CAB Autos factory.

Encouraging

Further work on the 28-acre site could see the business park expanded to 500,000 sq ft of industrial and warehouse space.

At a ceremony to break ground and mark the start of construction work, Sandwell's regeneration cabinet member, Councillor Paul Moore, said it was encouraging to see another speculative commercial development taking place in the borough.

He said: "There is no doubt that Sandwell offers businesses wishing to expand and grow a chance to move to an area at the forefront of industry, with established supply chains, great access to the motorway network as well as a highly skilled workforce."

At the ground breaking ceremony, from left, Bulleys agent Max Shelley, CBRE senior surveyor Greg Dolton, A&H Construction contract manager John Maley, Councillor Paul Moore, CEG investment manager Lawrence Escott, Bulleys' partner Steve Perriton, JLL project managers Simon Lea and Dan Powers and CBRE director Stuart Mair

A&H Construction has started work on the site and units will be ready later this year. John Maley, from A&H Construction, said: "As a local business we are proud to be involved with this formidable project, our aim is to build on the relationships we have with the local supply chain to ensure this project is delivered as planned and exceeds expectations."

This first phase of units will be eight metres high with separate yard and parking in a landscaped environment with 24-hour security, CCTV and gatehouse entry.

Lawrence Escott, investment manager at CEG, said: "We have appointed a West Midlands construction company as we are keen to see local job and training opportunities created in the area. The development will deliver high quality industrial and warehouse space set in a secure and very well-located environment. It will help to meet the strong market demand, which has been constrained in recent years through a significant lack of supply."

CGI of the proposed redevelopment at Vaughan Park in Tipton

Property agents CBRE and Bulleys have been appointed to market the site. Steve Perriton, partner at Bulleys, said: "We are delighted to see this speculative new phase of development taking place on this secure industrial park.

"This will see not only new development which is very welcome in the Black Country but a quality scheme with good roadside views from the main A457 Tipton Road which we believe will see good interest from occupiers"

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Couple found love during a game of musical chairs

By Charlotte Callear

IT was love at first 'sit' for a couple who have celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary.

Betty and Terrance Walker's romance started the first day they met at the age of 17, when she ended up on his lap as the music stopped and they ran to grab a seat at Brownhills Memorial Hall in a game of musical chairs.

Love blossomed and now, both aged 81 and living in Burntwood, they have just celebrated 60 years of marriage.

Terry grew up in Bulger Road, Bilston.

He moved with his family to his grandmother's at Muckley Corner and studied in Lichfield before moving to Shire Oak.

Betty grew up in Norton Canes where she studied at the village secondary modern.

Terry worked with railway signal boxes which earned him an apprenticeship at Rubery Owen and he went on to work as an electrician at Walsall Wood colliery before becoming an electrical engineering lecturer at Walsall College for 30 years.

Meanwhile, Betty worked as a secretary.

They married at St James' Church, Brownhills, but Terry's mother was unable to attend because she was ill so the newlyweds visited her in hospital.

Nowadays, the couple like to keep active and enjoy dancing and long walks as well as gardening.

The couple belong to the local rambling and wildlife group.

Betty said: "We have got a huge garden so we spend a lot of time there, especially in the summer, and the rest of the time we just enjoy ourselves."

Diamond celebration for Betty and Terrance Walker

Revving up for the Bike4Life charity day

MIDLANDS Air Ambulance Charity is holding its annual biking Ride Out and festival this month.

The charity's 23-mile Bike4Life event starts from Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, to RAF Cosford – where the yearly Bike4Life Festival will be held.

Approximately 3,500 motorcyclists who are taking part will be granted free travel across the M6 Toll on April 22, where they will be cheered on by hundreds of supporters along the route.

James Hodson, director of motorway operations and facilities for M6toll, said: "Midlands Air Ambulance Charity is responsible for amazing life-saving work. We have a great relationship with the charity, and will always look to support them where possible."

Sofia Voutianitis, for Midlands Air Ambulance Charity, said: "It's relationships like this that ensures we can raise as much money as possible for our cause."

Prices for bikers attending the Ride Out and festival are only £10 – with festival only tickets costing just £5.

Kevin Thewell with his son Robbie

Wolves staff dig deep for Carl's battle

AROUND £25,000 could be raised for charity after the wolf pack completed The Wolf Run in aid of Cure Leukaemia.

More than 30 runners from Wolves, including staff from its academy and community trust, took to the muddy track in Leamington Spa for the gruelling 10k course.

Carl Ikeme

They did so for their friend and colleague Carl Ikeme, the Wolves keeper who was diagnosed with acute leukaemia last summer.

Ikeme continues to undergo treatment and a host of fundraising activities have taken place throughout the year with more than £120,000 raised for Cure Leukaemia.

Just under £10,000 has been raised by the Wolf Run team so far and Wolves have pledged to double that, with hopes of reaching a final total of £25,000.

Sporting director Kevin Thelwell, who completed the run alongside his son Robbie, said it was all for Carl.

"Our academy manager Gareth Prosser came up with the idea – we all want to raise awareness and show our support for Carl in any way we can."

"Carl is a huge part of the Wolves family and almost the head of it in so many ways as he's been with the club since he was a youngster To have what happened last summer knocked everyone for six."

And as for the run itself, Thelwell added: "It was horrendous! They said it'd be loads of fun and there were a few obstacles...they didn't remind you of the 18-metre swim in a freezing cold lake!

Just so painful, says 207-mile trek fan

AN intrepid Wolves fan walked more than 200 miles from his home to Molineux in six days – raising more than £1,000 for Cure Leukaemia.

Finlay Crowe started off his 207-mile trek in his home town of Seaford, near Brighton. and finally arrived on the pitch at Molineux.

He wanted to raise funds for the charity Cure Leukaemia – after Wolves goalkeeper Carl Ikeme was diagnosed with acute leukaemia last summer.

So far, Finlay has passed his original fundraising target of £1,000 – with donations still rolling in.

The 28-year-old said: "It all went really well – but I have never felt so much pain my life. I have had two knee reconstructions in the past so that says something.

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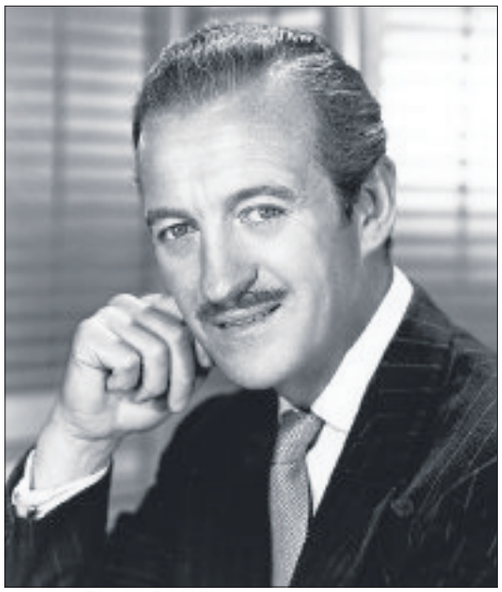
Shropshire beauty was courted by stars but always refused to write memoirs

A young Janey Kenyon-Slaney dancing with Jack Kennedy in 1939

1930s society beauties Janey Kenyon-Slaney, left, and her older sister Vivien



Film star David Niven – engagement rumours

The glamorous society girl who told no tales

By Toby Neal

IN those last carefree weeks before the outbreak of war, a photographer captured an arresting image of a teenage Shropshire society beauty dancing happily at a posh bash in London with a smiling young American.

Two young people, two remarkable lives.

She was Janey Kenyon-Slaney, a pre-war debutante who was once reportedly engaged to the Hollywood film star David Niven, and went on to work during the war with the cloak-and-dagger organisation the Special Operations Executive on Lord Mountbatten's staff.

And her partner that night at the American ambassador's residence in the summer of 1939? That beaming smile should be familiar – because he was destined to become one of the most famous, and tragic, figures of the 20th century.

It was Jack Kennedy, the future President of the United States.

Janey, who was brought up at Hatton Grange, near Shifnal, was a great friend of the Kennedys. The dad, Joe, was American ambassador and his eldest daughter Kathleen, nicknamed "Kick," was a particular pal of hers.

Janey, granddaughter of the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn, was part of the glittering set of pretty young things in the last hurrah of debutantes in the late 1930s.

She married three times. First in October 1940 to Peter Lindsay, who was in the Irish Guards and 20 years older. He too served in the SOE and won the DSO, and post-war founded Meribel, one of the most popular resorts of the French Alps.

Simon, from Much Wenlock, with Janey, centre, and on the right, his wife Mary. He tried, in vain, to persuade his half-sister to write her memoirs

Janey with first husband Peter Lindsay, who was 20 years older than her

Kenyon-Slaney children at Hatton Grange, near Shifnal, in January 1927. From left, Vivien, Ursula - who preferred to be called Janey - and baby Robin

Transform

Husband number two was another war hero, and a household name – the flying ace Sir Max Aitken, DSO, DFC, the son of Lord Beaverbrook. They married in 1946, had two daughters, and divorced in 1950.

Lastly, Robin Compton, whom she wed in 1951. He became European chairman of Time Life International. They were to take over his father's house, Newby Hall, near Ripon, Yorkshire, and Janey used her talents to transform the interiors. Third time lucky as she found lasting happinesse.

Hers is a life story which would be worth a book. And the fact that she never wrote one has left Simon Kenyon-Slaney, of Much Wenlock, without all that much information about her fascinating life.

"She was my half-sister, quite a lot older than me. I was a small boy still at school when all these interesting things were happening," he said. "I did ask her to write her memoirs on more than one occasion, and my brother tried the same. She would not. Partly it was a sense of obligation, not to divulge things she might have been involved in. All our family are devoid of lots of interesting things we might have known.

"There are one or two aspects she did unbutton a bit. Her social life just before the beginning of the war was pretty bright. She made a bosom pal of Kathleen Kennedy, Joe Kennedy's eldest daughter, whose nickname was Kick. They went to lots of house parties and things in each other's company.

"Janey was staying with the Kennedys in the south of France when war broke out in 1939. There was a big shemozzle about getting back. She and Kick Kennedy came back to England in bathing suits – they were on the beach and whisked back to England."

Janey's engagement to David Niven was reported around the world in early 1940.The famous actor had returned to Britain to fight for his country, and quickly fell into the social scene. The engagement reports were denied, although according to one newspaper "it is well known among friends that they have been seeing much of each other for some time."

Janey was born Ursula Jane Kenyon-Slaney on January 15, 1920, and was the second of three children, her sister Vivien being born in 1918, and brother Robin in 1926.

"Ursula was quite a fashionable name in those days. She hated being called Ursula and was determined at the earliest possible point to renounce it," said Simon. Instead she used her second name, being known as Janey or Jane. Sadly her parents' marriage failed and Simon's father Robert Orlando Rodolph Kenyon-Slaney, known as Rody to family and friends, remarried. Simon, who is a former Shropshire Deputy Lieutenant and High Sheriff, said: "I was born in January 1932. I was 12 years younger than her which is why I'm so ignorant about her.

"She went to school at Ryton, near Beckbury. There was a girls' school in the vicarage run by a redoubtable lady called Miss Stirling – I think her first name was May.

Headstrong

"My mother Nesta found herself lumbered with three children at a difficult age. Janey was kicked out of the school by Miss Stirling for some silly child misdemeanour. I think she was rather a headstrong girl."

Janey then went to St James' near Malvern.

"Because her mother was in high society circles, the daughter of a duke and so on, she had all the best of the parties and went to all the grand things.

"She was beautiful, as was her elder sister Vivien. They were a very attractive pair on the London scene. They would have had the attention of many young men."

Simon can shed no light on her alleged engagement to David Niven, at which time she was a nurse with the Auxiliary Nursing Service.

"That was a very brief fling, I think. There was talk of her getting engaged to him. I don't know if she was technically engaged to him."

Of Janey's second husband, Sir Max Aitken, Simon said: "Almost the only time I met him was at school. He came to give a lecture at Eton, where I was still a pupil. He had become an MP in the 1945 election."

Janey married Robin Compton in 1951, and they had two sons.

Robin took over Newby Hall from his father in 1960 and while he concentrated on developing the 25 acres of gardens, she set about restoring and redecorating all the public rooms, meticulously researching all Robert Adam's original interiors. Simon says of her: "I got on with her very well. She was quite a dominant person. A lot of people found her far from easy to get on with. She had a very firm view about everything and did not take prisoners lightly.

"She was a very gifted interior decorator and having married Robin and later moving into this great house hugely in need of restoration, that became her life's work.

"She actually disliked Yorkshire intensely. She was much more a sophisticated woman who liked London and the arts scene."

Robin died in 2009, and Janey on April 7, 2012.

Karate kid Joey is an inspiration

A SCHOOLBOY who battled cancer is using his passion for karate to help other young patients.

Joey Kehoe, a pupil at Hagley Catholic High School, was diagnosed with a brain tumour when he was just four. Joey was admitted to Birmingham Children's Hospital where he underwent surgery to remove the tumour. The specialist neuro-oncology team discovered the tumour was cancerous meaning a year-long course of intense treatment. This included 33 rounds of radiotherapy, chemotherapy lasting more than eight months and more surgery.

His father Darren, a quantity surveyor, said: "It was a long and arduous journey, with lots of tough days, but we're so proud that he's now doing so well."

Darren and Kathryn, Joey's mum, suggested he go to the Young Gloves Karate club in Kidderminster and since taking up the martial art in 2013 he has gone from strength-to-strength.

Darren, 48, from Stourport, explained: "He had some issues following his treatment, as you would expect, but sport has really helped him to improve his co-ordination skills and his core strength. Most importantly, it's helped give back his confidence and self-esteem. We can't recommend sports and exercise enough as a way of aiding recovery."

Joey, a brown belt, was a special guest at the latest session run by the nurses. Along with his sensei Justin Thomas, and members of his karate club, he delivered a 'boxercise' class.

Joey Kehoe, with Sensei Justin Thomas at Birmingham Children's Hospital

£30k restoration project go-ahead for canal bridge

AN old canal bridge is to be restored after council bosses approved £30,000 for the project.

The cash will bring back to life the Grade ll-listed Blackbrook Junction Bridge which is situated on the Dudley No.2 Canal in Netherton.

Councillor Christine Perks, whose ward covers the area, welcomed the move saying the restoration would benefit the area.

Dudley Council's cabinet approved the funding at a meeting in February with the cash to come from the Community Infrastructure Levy.

It is thought the bridge dates back to the 19th century when the canal was built.

In its current state the bridge is covered by graffiti. Councillor Perks said: "I think this is great news. I am a great fan of canals and a member of the Canal and River Trust.

"There are some fabulous walks along the canals. You now see herons flying around the canal. When we were children we never saw them."

The bridge forms part of Blackbrook Road which runs between Hill Street and Narrowboat Way.

"The road is open to the public but no longer to motor vehicles, said Councillor Perks.

The bridge will be looked after by the Canal and River Trust, which maintains waterways around England.

Carillion jobs go but 10,000 have been saved

ANOTHER two dozen Carillion workers are facing redundancy this week, but the number of jobs saved since the company's collapse has now topped the 10,000 mark.

A further 179 former Carillion staff have been transferred to new employers taking over contracts from the failed Wolverhampton-based construction and services group.

by Simon Penfold

But 23 have been told they are 'no longer require' and will lose their jobs this week.

So far 10,125 jobs have been saved and 1,825 jobs have been made redundant through the liquidation.

The future of more than 5,000 former Carillion staff still hangs in the balance, including more than 200 still working at the company's headquarters in Wolverhampton.

Sale

The city centre office block itself, which was owned by a private property company, is now up for sale for around £3 million.

A spokesperson for the Official Receiver said: "More than 10,000 of Carillion's pre-liquidation workforce have now found secure ongoing employment, following the transfer of 179 staff to new employers.

"Regretably 23 employees whose positions are no longer required as Carillion's business transfers to new suppliers will leave the business later this week.

"I am continuing to talk with potential purchasers for Carillion's remaining contracts and will keep staff, elected employee representatives and unions informed as these arrangements are confirmed."

The totals of jobs saved and lost does not include those attached to contracts where a potential buyer has declared an intention to purchase but the deal has yet to be formally sealed.

Carillion had 450 contracts with Government departments and the public sector, from school meals and cleaning prisons to maintenance of thousands of Armed Forces homes across the UK.

Meanwhile Britain's big four accountancy firms will face fines of up to £10 million as part of new regulatory powers aimed at clamping down on 'seriously poor audit work'.

The changes comes amid mounting criticism of the Financial Reporting Council regarding its oversight of the accounting profession following the collapse of Carillion.

Terrifying tales at pub

AN evening of terrifying tales is promised at a Stourbridge pub. The Librarian will perform Walpurgusnacht at Katie Fitzgerald's pub in Enville Street on April 26 at 7.30pm.

There will be three chilling stores from author A G Smith read during the evening.

The performance is unsuitable for children aged under 12-years-old and tickets are £10, available on (01384) 396752.

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Student from the 1930s had vision of year 2000

Shrewsbury Technical College where the visionary Frank J.G. Offord was a pupil

LET'S take a look at Shrewsbury nearly 70 years in the future – yes, the Shrewsbury of 2000 A.D.

Well, a lot of Salopians will know what Shrewsbury was like at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries.

But we are going back to Christmas 1931, when a student at Shrewsbury Technical College, one Frank J.G. Offord, won a prize for his English essay which imagined what Shrewsbury would be like in the year 2000.

It's quite a long essay, but let's give a flavour of what he found: "Early one October morning I took one huge stride over 70 years and came down in Shrewsbury 2000 A.D.

"I had come down right enough, but where was I? Drake gazing on the Pacific for the first time could not have been more silent or more moved than I was.

"My first impression was dominated by the rural nature of my surroundings. Gradually I came to discover differences. Where there were houses, there were indeed large houses. Not far from me I recognised what was once called the English Bridge. I could see the trees near the riverside preparing for winter, just as they had done in the 'good old days,' but all the houses that had surrounded the river were gone, and there was now one stretch of verdure."

Shrewsbury had become a Midlands beauty spot, its only population being 2,000 students. Behind him, Shrewsbury Abbey was still standing.

"There was not a house to interrupt the view up to the Column – again, there was that delightful vista of green. On my right was a massive building, extending into what had once been a football field."

Gazed

As Frank gazed at it "a creature of great stature, dressed in blue" emerged from it and invited him in to what turned out to be the modern version of Shrewsbury Technical College, with extensive use of glass resulting in light and airy rooms. He was taken to the principal, who showed no surprise that Frank was from 1931. He brought Frank up to date with international affairs, telling him modern nations existed under a system of limited sovereignty.

"No country has a foreign policy or a foreign office, because there are no foreign countries," the principal told Frank. Scholars finished their usual education at 16, and then every male was drafted into the International Service Organisation, spending his service abroad to learn foreign languages, form friendships, and broaden the mind. Returning at 18, he then had vocational or technical training until 21.

As for young ladies, between 16 and 19 they were trained as nurses and "thereafter they proceed to professional training according to their ability and inclination."

England had lost her mining areas and many of the dirty cities had gone. Local shops had also gone, with Shrewsbury linked with Birmingham for supplies, and an aeroplane arrived daily with food supplies.

"Radiovision," the principal told Frank, had eliminated the "talkie cinema" and there were three international newspapers which, by law, had to publish in French, Spanish and German on certain days of the week to maintain "a more cosmopolitan attitude of mind."

A machine gun demonstration amid the palms. Picture: Felicity Burke, whose uncle Ern Tipton was in the 4th Battalion.

KSLI soldiers in Hong Kong in about 1916. The picture came from Sarah Coates, whose grandfather Albert Wynn is back, second from left.

No home-coming, but hope and heartbreak

MEMORY LANE

Report by Toby Neal

AS the Shropshire soldiers landed in France in July 1917, the French dock workers must have smiled.

They were Territorials – soldiers who typically had peacetime jobs as farm workers, factory workers, foundrymen or shopkeepers, or whatever.

However, the reason for any smiles would have been nothing to do with the perceived fighting abilities of these troops of the 4th Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry. It would have been all to do with how they were dressed.

Because these troops destined for the mud and the trenches of the Western Front were dressed in tropical kit, complete with shorts.

They had completed a long sea journey from the Far East and back home in Shropshire there was great excitement at the prospect of the return on leave of loved ones after nearly three years away.

Instead, in a remarkable act of military heartlessness, the Shropshire soldiers were given no leave whatsoever, and after calling in briefly at a British port were sent straight to France.

The soldiers had no choice in the matter, but back in Shropshire there was great anger.

The Shrewsbury Chronicle reported: "Telegrams were received by many of the wives and relatives of the men; and preparations were made to give them a hearty reception after their absence for nearly three years.

"Two or three towns displayed flags, and bands were hastily got together to meet the trains on which the Shropshires were expected."

These are presumed to be KSLI soldiers in the Far East. The board says "Muffled Peal, Curry & Rice, Gott Strafe Bill" – a reference to the Kaiser. It also has drawings of people being hanged, perhaps a reference to the mutiny in Singapore which the troops helped put down. Picture: Felicity Burke.

The newspaper report added: "Several of the railway stations were besieged with anxious crowds, and the railway officials had a warm time in placating those who, not unreasonably, expected to see their long absent relatives.

"In the meantime, the Battalion had been embarked for 'somewhere in France,' whither they were sent in their colonial kit, which attracted much attention wherever they went, as the men were suffering from cold.

"To those at home, it appears to be the refinement of cruelty to take these men without allowing them short leave to see their friends after so long an absence; and there is very much discontent and dissatisfaction throughout the county."

According to the paper: "The men reconciled themselves to the inevitable, however hard and unjust, not to say stupid, they may have considered it."

Questions were asked of the Under Secretary for War in the House of Commons by local MPs Sir Charles Henry and Sir Beville Stanier and Newport Urban District Council wired a protest to the War Office.

The reason given for not giving the Shropshires any leave was that there was an urgent need for men in France.

The MPs called on the Under Secretary to make representations for early leave for the Shropshire soldiers, but received a non-committal reply.

Some of the soldiers would never see their loved ones again.

The battalion was pitched in to the fighting around Ypres and on just their first day in battle lost 130 men, compared with half a dozen lost to illness while in the Far East, where the soldiers had been on garrison duty in places like Hong Kong, Singapore – where they put down a rebellion and formed the firing squads to execute the mutineers – and Burma.

In France their crowning achievement came at a hill near Rheims in France, on June 6, 1918, which the soldiers stormed amid shot and shell in an exploit which saw the entire regiment awarded the Croix de Guerre avec Palme by the French.

The centenary of the Battle of Bligny is being marked by a series of events in Shrewsbury in June, with the climax being on Saturday, June 9, with a service at St Chad's Church, a commemorative lunch at Shrewsbury Castle, and a concert at the castle.

How did a dentist end up in line up of darts players?

Dentist Samuel Blain, far right with the glasses

HERE'S a chance for budding local history sleuths to cut their teeth and answer this question – why is a dentist who is not interested in darts on this picture?

David Blain came across the picture the other day and has a particular family interest in it, and is hoping readers can come up with more information.

It seems to show darts players – we're assuming that because they are posed in front of a dartboard – at a pub in Shrewsbury proudly showing off their shield.

Unless they all wore jackets and ties normally, they are all dressed to have their photo taken to record their triumph in winning that handsome trophy.

David said: "The gentleman with glasses was my grandfather, Samuel Blain, who died in 1964 aged about 75.

"He had been a dentist until his death having originally been a false teeth maker with, I believe, his brother before the First World War. He had a surgery in Shrewsbury and also up to around 1958 at Wem.

"I do not know any of the people with him nor the location. To my knowledge he was not interested in darts. He was more interested in horse racing and playing bridge. I wonder if someone can perhaps identify the picture and possible date. My best guess is the 1950s and perhaps a location near the English Bridge.

"His surgery was at 35b Wyle Cop and he lived upstairs, as did we until 1954 when we moved to Wellington. My father worked at the Midland Electricity Board.

"I am now living in Leicestershire and am retired."

David came across the picture while having a trawl of the internet for photos of Shropshire, and particularly for those from the English Bridge area of Shrewsbury, a place which holds so many memories for him.

The Ticket

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Stage roles like this are in my blood . . .

Returning to Blood Brothers is like greeting an old friend for actress Lyn Paul, who found fame with the New Seekers in the early 1970s before finding more recent success and critical acclaim in the long-running West End musical.

For 20 years, she has played the part of Mrs Johnstone at the Phoenix Theatre and on a UK tour. There are times when you'd expect her to know it in her sleep.

"You know what, strangely enough, I was lying in bed the other night going through the opening song and I reached one part, but for the life of me couldn't remember the rest of it, and I had to get up and go downstairs to get the script and go through it! At 4 o'clock in the morning, ridiculous! So it's playing on my mind obviously (laughs)!"

The show will feature at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Monday until April 21, after surpassing 10,000 performances in London's West End.

Fans can look forward to a glitzy production of a musical that has been christened the 'Standing Ovation Musical', with a score including Bright New Day, Marilyn Monroe and the emotive hit Tell Me It's Not True.

We caught up with Lyn to find out what she loves about the new touring production:

"I will treat it like a new show. Obviously it's easier because I do know what I'm doing and because it is so well directed. When I first started it was directed by Bill and also Bob Tomson, so all those notes I have I've still got written down and a lot of that will come back to me because I think the way they directed it is just second to none. I'm desperately looking forward to going back and bringing that with me."

Family matters – Lyn stars in the acclaimed hit Blood Brothers

ULTIMATE

You played the role of Mrs Johnstone from 1997 right up until 2000, then revived it in 2008 and then again in 2012 for the final two weeks of its West End run – fair to say it's your ultimate role?

"Oh absolutely, without a shadow of a doubt! Mrs J is just me. Everything that she's going through I feel, the way Willy's (Russell) written it is so easy to get over to an audience as it's actually written as you would speak. Sometimes, when people write a script, you look at it and think, 'well, that's not how I would say it'. But this is so perfectly written and so easy, it just flows, and I just feel that Mrs J is me, so it makes it very easy to play."

No doubt a huge factor when accepting the role again for the tour?

"Absolutely. And also, because of Bill (Kenwright). When I first played Mrs J, I was doing cabaret and he took me away from all that. I wrote to Bill and asked him if he would consider me for the role of Mrs J, he sent me a letter back by return post, and less than three weeks later I was waiting on the stage at the Phoenix Theatre (West End) to start rehearsals and I cannot tell you what it did to me. I'd never acted and I thought, 'oh my god, I can't do this!' But Bill showed so much faith in me that I will always go back. He's only got to click his fingers and I'll be straight in, no problem."

So it was a chance letter that changed your life?

"Oh yes, absolutely. I didn't know Bill although I knew Carl Wayne, who was the Narrator at that point, and he came to see me in a cabaret show I was in down the road from the Phoenix Theatre and he told me 'you know, you should go and audition for Mrs Johnstone'. I didn't even know Blood Brothers, so I asked him about it and said, 'I can't, I don't act' But he said I should give it a go. So I went back and discussed it with my mum and she said, 'Oh Bill Kenwright, he's a very nice man'. I said, 'how do you know, you've never met him', and she said, 'well I've seen him interviewed and he's a very nice man, write to him!' Typical Northern mum! So I did, I wrote and just said 'would you consider seeing me for the role of Mrs J, I'm not Liverpudlian but I can get into the accent', gave him all that, and I posted it off. Two days later I got a return letter saying, 'don't worry about the Liverpudlian accent love, we'll sort that, you don't need one, you're a Northerner, and I'd love to see you'. And that was it. And from that moment on we became good friends."

While Blood Brothers is what you're synonymous with, you also toured with Cabaret for Bill – how did you get involved with that?

> *I can relate to her to a great extent . . . it just happens*

"I got an email from him which said he'd like to put me up for Fräulein Schneider, how would I feel about it? I wrote back and said I would love it, he sent me the script and the parts he wanted me to do, asked me to come into the office, I went in and went through the songs, went up to Bill's office, we went through the scenes and that was that. Bill has been a very good friend to me and a very good boss, he's been very loyal to me and I will always be there."

You starred in Cabaret with Will Young, who started out as a pop star like you did – how hard or easy was it to develop acting skills, particularly with no experience?

"Well, you're not being yourself, it's totally different to standing on stage and being yourself and having to make a speech at the end of a gig, I'm useless at that. But when you go on stage and you're playing a character, it just seems to happen for me. Especially Mrs J because I can relate to her so well being a Northern mum and having gone through a lot of struggles in my life, lots of lows. I can relate to her to a great extent, so I feel that it just comes, it just happens."

Tickets are available from the venue.

Andy Richardson

- **For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.**

Hot property – Arcade Fire

Hotting up for a great night indie arena with Arcade Fire

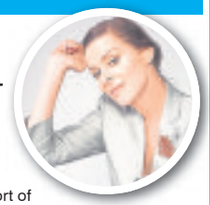
CANADIAN indie rockers Arcade Fire are blazing a trail once again with their latest album Everything Now, and fans have the chance to see them live when they perform at the Genting Arena on Sunday.

Consisting of husband and wife Win Butler and Régine Chassagne, along with Win's younger brother William Butler, Richard Reed Parry, Tim Kingsbury and Jeremy Gara, all the band's studio albums have received nominations for best alternative music album at the Grammys.

Founded in 2000 by friends and classmates Win Butler and Josh Deu, the band came to prominence in 2004 with the release of their critically acclaimed debut album Funeral. Their second studio album, Neon Bible, won them the 2008 Meteor Music Award for best international album and the 2008 Juno Award for alternative album of the year. Their third studio album, The Suburbs, was released in 2010 to critical acclaim and commercial success, followed by Reflector in 2013, which was the score for feature film Her, seeing band members William Butler and Owen Pallett nominated for an Academy Award .

It's a unique sound they produce, with members playing guitar, drums, bass guitar, piano, violin, viola, cello, double bass, xylophone, glockenspiel, keyboard, synthesizer, French horn, accordion, harp, mandolin and hurdy-gurdy, with the multi-instrumentalists switching duties throughout the show.

Music bug took Lisa all around the world



Singer Lisa Stansfield's childhood was the biggest influence on her career.

She grew up listening to the classic records that her mother played by such artists as Patsy Cline, Brenda Lee and Diana Ross. "My mum used to listen to that stuff all the time.

"I suppose it was innate – I would have been listening to that in her tummy. I came out singing it. Those are your teachers, all those people."

Lisa's early hits owed much to that roster of influences, as All Around The World and All Woman told stories – just like the records performed by her own idols. "I love telling stories. Vocally I adopted the soul element of the music. Lyrically a lot of the time I'm a bit country-fied – I do like to tell a tear-jerking story. It's really corny but I think there's a line – if you mess yourself up you mess everything up, I'm just on the border of it.

"So I just learned that from a really, early age. I just got to know the songs off by heart.

"I supposed when you start singing along with something and it feels special and it has a sensation, an actual physical sensation – it just felt incredible. And that sensation has just carried on and on. I think my mum and dad thought it was going to end at some point. They sort of humoured me for a while. But, no, I couldn't live without singing and stuff, really," she says with a sincerity that is unshakable. "Singing is a massive part of me."

She is happy to have strong roots in the North of England, though she and her husband have lived for long periods in New York and Ireland. "Me and Ian travelled for so long, where we are together that's our home. I didn't particularly miss anywhere. The only time you miss something is when you get back and you realise you missed it."

● **Lisa plays at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham on Tuesday.**

Baddiel's family affairs on show

HE'S big mates with West Bromwich's Frank Skinner, who lives down his road, and now David Baddiel is bringing his acclaimed one-man-show, My Family: Not The Sitcom to Dudley Town Hall on Thursday.

Covering subjects such as ageing, infidelity, dysfunctional relatives, moral policing on social media, the show is a massively disrespectful celebration of the lives of David Baddiel's late sex-mad mother, Sarah, and dementia-ridden father, Colin.

Ship comes in for Sting with musical

The Last Ship, the acclaimed musical by pop superstar Sting comes to Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre from Monday to Saturday.

Initially inspired by Sting's 1991 album The Soul Cages and his own childhood experiences, the production tells the story of a community amid the demise of the shipbuilding industry in Tyne and Wear, with the closure of the Swan Hunter shipyard.

This personal, political and passionate new musical from the multiple Grammy Award winner, is an epic account of a family, a community and a great act of defiance.

It stars The Upper Hand star Joe McGann, Charlie Hardwick, Richard Fleeshman, recently seen as Sky Masterson in the UK tour of Guys and Dolls, and Frances McNamee.

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SATURDAY'S TV APRIL 14

CHOICE

Simon Cowell

Britain's Got Talent (ITV, 8pm)
Apparently, so impressed were the 'powers that be' (including Simon Cowell) with Declan Donnelly's solo performance at the helm of Saturday Night Takeaway over the Easter weekend, that they decided there and then to confirm him as the sole host of this year's Britain's Got Talent. The auditions are, of course, pre-recorded, meaning the Geordie duo will be presenting together as usual for the time being. Regular viewers will know that, at this early stage, there's every chance that a true star in the making might be found amongst the throngs of hopefuls auditioning – but there will also be no end of people whose hopes, dreams and ambitions far outweigh their actual abilities.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen. **11.30** Classic Mary Berry. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Commonwealth Games 2018. Highlights of day 10 from Queensland. **4.30** Final Score. **5.30** A Question of Sport. (R)

6.00 Doodlebugs. Sketch show in which inanimate objects share their thoughts on the world. With the voices of Kayvan Novak, Cardinal Burns, Morgana Robinson and Spencer Jones. Last in the series.

6.15 Ready or Not. Something fruity is happening at a market stall in Plymouth in the game show featuring unsuspecting members of the public facing surprise challenges while going about their lives.

6.45 BBC News.

6.55 Regional Programme.

7.05 Pointless Celebrities. Actors Danny John-Jules, Nigel Lindsay, Liz Carr, Lisa Hammond, Trudie Goodwin, Lisa Maxwell, Bill Maynard and Tricia Penrose compete in the general knowledge quiz.

7.55 Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles presents the game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject.

8.35 Casualty. Bea treats a shopkeeper who has collapsed during a robbery, but faces a dilemma when she begins to suspect two brothers in her care are the men responsible for the crime.

9.30 Mrs Brown's Boys. Agnes ends up at the wrong venue after trying to gatecrash Maria's hen party. She then tries to impress the bride-to-be's mother during a dinner date, but the evening ends in chaos. (R)

10.00 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.20 Match of the Day. Highlights of Tottenham Hotspur v Manchester City.

11.45 Commonwealth Games 2018. JJ Chalmers introduces live coverage as the 11th and final day of the Games continues in Queensland, featuring the men's and women's marathons alongside squash and rugby sevens.

3.30 Commonwealth Games 2018. Live netball, squash and rugby sevens on the 11th and final day.

BBC2

6.00 Commonwealth Games 2018. Day 10 continues with live athletics, netball and rugby sevens. **10.00** Commonwealth Games 2018. Gabby Logan and Clare Balding present live diving and squash on day 10. **12.00** Commonwealth Games 2018. Live diving coverage as day 10 reaches its conclusion. **1.15** MasterChef: The Finals. (R) **2.15** MasterChef: The Finals. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Continent. (R) **4.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **4.45** Flog It! (R) **5.30** Living with the Brainy Bunch. (R)

6.30 Today at the Games. Clare Balding and Gabby Logan round up the best of the action from day 10 of the Commonwealth Games in Queensland. The men's and women's 4x100m and 4x400m relay finals provided the climax to the athletics schedule at the Carrara Stadium, and Team England harboured medal hopes after recent successes at global level. Northern Ireland took home nine boxing medals in Glasgow four years ago, and the likes of Michaela Walsh and James McGivern were tasked with delivering more podium finishes at Oxenford Studios. Tom Daley attempted to retain his 10m platform diving title at Optus Aquatic Centre, while champions were also crowned in road cycling, basketball, squash, shooting, table tennis and wrestling.

8.00 The Forest. New series. Mark Bonnar narrates a documentary following the people who live and work in Galloway Forest Park, where 600,000 tons of timber is produced every year.

8.30 Dad's Army. Jonesy's van runs out of petrol and the platoon is forced to spend the night in a spooky deserted house, where the men's imaginations soon run wild. (R)

9.00 Gettys: The World's Richest Art Dynasty.

10.15 Commonwealth Games 2018. JJ Chalmers presents live coverage as the 11th and final day of the Games gets under way in Queensland, featuring the men's and women's marathons at Southport Broadwater Parklands.

11.45 Film: Swingers. (1996) A failed actor struggling to get over a break-up is dragged into the singles scene by a friend. Comedy, with Jon Favreau and Vince Vaughn.

1.15 Civilisations. (R) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.20** BBC News.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Star Wars Freemaker Adventures. (R) **7.25** The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.30** Teen Titans Go! (R) **7.45** Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Saturday. **9.25** James Martin's Saturday Morning. **11.25** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **12.20** ITV News; Weather. **12.25** Change Your Tune. (R) **1.30** Britain's Brightest Family. (R) **2.00** ITV Racing: Grand National Festival. Live coverage of four races. **4.35** ITV Racing Live: The Grand National. Ed Chamberlin and Francesca Cumani present live coverage from Aintree.

6.15 ITV News; Weather.

6.25 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.30 Ninja Warrior UK. New series. Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shephard, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.

7.30 Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. New series. The madcap panel show returns, with Micky Flanagan, Robert Peston, Sally Dynevor and Anneka Rice tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion.

8.00 Britain's Got Talent. New series. Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly host the opening auditions of the nationwide talent search. The usual wide variety of acts, from comedians to contortionists, magicians to martial artists and singers to spoon players, compete to impress returning judges Simon Cowell, Alesha Dixon, Amanda Holden and David Walliams.

9.25 The Keith and Paddy Picture Show. New series. Keith Lemon and Paddy McGuinness remake Grease, with the help of special guests including Stacey Solomon, Nicole Scherzinger, Fearne Cotton and Marvin Humes.

9.55 ITV News; Weather.

10.15 Film: Legally Blonde. (2001) A dizzy teenager enrols at Harvard to try to prove to her ex-boyfriend that she is not stupid, but finds herself out of her depth. Comedy, with Reese Witherspoon.

12.05 Marcella. (R) **12.55** Jackpot247. **3.00** Babushka. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Motor Sport: Mini Challenge. **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** The King of Queens. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Frasier. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Simpsons. (R) **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** Formula 1 Chinese Grand Prix Qualifying Highlights. **2.30** Car SOS. (R) **3.30** The Restoration Man. (R) **4.30** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **5.35** The Secret Life of the Zoo. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Coastal Railways with Julie Walters. The actress travels from Cardigan Bay to Liverpool, visiting the heritage railway in Tywyn that was the inspiration for Thomas the Tank Engine and a community that is famous for knitting. She also visits Europe's fastest zip wire and largest pet cemetery. (R)

8.00 Britain's Most Historic Towns. Alice Roberts tells the story of Viking England by studying the history of York. She takes part in a Viking battle, meets the metal detectorists behind one of the UK's greatest archaeological finds and gets her hands on an almost 1,000-year-old poo. Aerial archaeologist Ben Robinson takes to the skies to see how the current layout of York reflects its history.

9.00 Film: Thor. (2011) The Norse god of thunder is banished from his own world when his arrogance puts the kingdom on the brink of war. He is sent to present-day Earth, where he is forced to live among humans without his supernatural powers, but must regain his abilities to defend his new home against his evil brother. Kenneth Branagh's fantasy adventure based on the Marvel comics, starring Chris Hemsworth, Natalie Portman, Tom Hiddleston and Anthony Hopkins.

11.15 Film: Big Game. (2014) A teenage hunter helps the US president to escape from terrorists pursuing him through the Finnish wilderness. Action adventure, with Samuel L Jackson and Onni Tommila.

12.55 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **1.45** Hollyoaks. (R) **3.55** Building the Dream. (R) **4.50** The Question Jury. (R) **5.45** Steph and Dom's One Star to Five Star. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.30** The Gadget Show. (R) **11.30** Traffic Cops. (R) **12.30** Traffic Cops. (R) **1.30** Traffic Cops: On the Edge. (R) **2.30** Live Aviva Premiership Rugby Union. Leicester Tigers v Northampton Saints (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! (R)

6.00 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away! Enforcement officers are faced with the difficult job of evicting a woman with two children – a task that takes a turn for the worse when her ex-partner makes an appearance. (R)

7.00 The Secret Life of Owls. The second of two programmes in which cameras follow the lives of owls living in rural Essex on a former First World War airfield. Missing Claw and Stripetail now have three chicks, who must learn how to fly, hunt and pounce. Meanwhile, five tawny owl chicks arrive from a local wildlife centre.

8.00 QE2: The World's Greatest Cruise Ship. Part one of two. Documentary telling the story behind the problems that almost spelled the end of the Queen Elizabeth 2 before she was finished. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray introduces highlights from the weekend's games, including Norwich City v Cardiff City at Carrow Road, Middlesbrough v Bristol City at the Riverside Stadium, Aston Villa v Leeds United at Villa Park, Hull City v Sheffield Wednesday at the KCOM Stadium and Queens Park Rangers v Preston North End at Loftus Road.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. Colin Murray introduces all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including Charlton Athletic v Scunthorpe United and Grimsby Town v Barnet.

10.30 20 Moments That Rocked the 00s. Lauren Laverne presents a countdown of some of the most memorable moments from the decade, featuring a look at world-changing news stories and entertainment headlines. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Murder on the Internet. (R) **4.00** The Murderer Next Door: Countdown to Murder. (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Divine Designs. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Atlantic: The Wildest Ocean on Earth **8.00** Commonwealth Games Extra **9.00** Salamander: Blood Diamonds **10.35** The Bermuda Triangle: Beneath the Waves **11.35** From Andy Pandy to Zebedee: The Golden Age of Children's TV **12.35** Insect Worlds **1.05** Atlantic: The Wildest Ocean on Earth **2.05** The Bermuda Triangle: Beneath the Waves **3.05** Close

ITV2
12.05 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **1.40** Britain's Got Talent: Top 10 Social Superstars **2.40** Totally You've Been Framed! Gold 2 **3.45 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **4.45** FYI Daily **4.50 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.35 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **6.35** FYI Daily **6.40 Film:** Liar Liar (1997) **7.15 Film:** Arthur (2011) **8.15** FYI Daily **8.20 Film:** Arthur (2011) **9.25** Britain's Got More Talent **10.30** Celebrity Juice **11.15** Family Guy **12.40** American Dad! **1.40** Plebs **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
11.00 A Touch of Frost **3.00 Film:** Columbo: Death Hits the Jackpot (1991) **5.00** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Vera **1.00** On the Buses **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 The Virtual Grand National 2018 **12.00** The Big Fish Off **1.00** Pawn Stars **1.30 Film:** Red River (1948) **2.35** FYI Daily **2.40 Film:** Red River (1948) **4.10 Film:** The Last Sunset (1961) **5.15** FYI Daily **5.20 Film:** The Last Sunset (1961) **6.25 Film:** The Man with the Golden Gun (1974) **7.25** FYI Daily **7.30 Film:** The Man with the Golden Gun (1974) **9.00 Film:** Lethal Weapon 3 (1992) **10.00** FYI Daily **10.05 Film:** Lethal Weapon 3 (1992) **11.20 Film:** Eraser (1996) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25 Film:** Eraser (1996) **1.40** River Monsters **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 New Girl **12.00** The Goldbergs **2.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **4.00** Young Sheldon **4.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Alien Resurrection (1997) **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Naked Attraction **1.15** Tattoo Fixers **2.20** Rude Tube **3.15** Gogglebox **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **4.50** Rude(ish) Tube

Film4
11.00 Thunderbirds (2004) **1.00** Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties (2006) **2.35** Rio 2 (2014) **4.35** The Core (2003) **7.15** Europa Report (2013) **9.00** Triple 9 (2016) **11.15** Speed (1994) **1.30** Insidious (2010) **3.40** Close

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SUNDAY'S TV APRIL 15

CHOICE

Eleanor Tomlinson

Ordeal by Innocence (BBC1, 9pm)
The Argyll children are forced to relive the events of the terrible Christmas Eve when Rachel was murdered to finally uncover the truth about who killed her and why. However, they soon discover that everyone in the family had a reason for wanting to get rid of her. Arthur's assertion that he is telling the truth puts his life in danger, prompting a race against time to save his life, while Leo and Gwenda's wedding descends into violence as a vengeful party plots to take the law into their own hands. Bill Nighy, Anthony Boyle, Anna Chancellor, Morven Christie, Crystal Clarke, Christian Cooke, Alice Eve and Matthew Goode star. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.30** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** MasterChef: The Finals. (R) **2.15** MasterChef: The Final. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Lifeline. **4.10** Songs of Praise. **4.45** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. The contestants face a test of their portrait-painting skills at RAF Hendon, and discover the different challenges presented by painting older and younger subjects. A gathering of RAF personnel and members of the public assess their efforts and choose a favourite before judges Daphne Todd and Lachlan Goudie decide who will be leaving the series this week.

7.00 Countryfile. In Cumbria, Matt Baker walks along a new section of the England Coast Path, meeting the people who created it and a local film-maker, while Anita Rani explores a trail documenting the life of artist Percy Kelly. Plus, Helen Skelton meets a man who gave up city life to make hand-crafted chopping boards, and Sean Fletcher reports on efforts to save a breeding colony of black guillemots. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.

8.00 Antiques Roadshow. The team values more decorative objects and rarities.

9.00 Ordeal by Innocence. The Argylls relive the events of Rachel's death to uncover the truth. However, they soon discover that everyone in the family had a reason to kill her. Last in the series.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Match of the Day 2. Mark Chapman reviews the day's Premier League action, with highlights of Newcastle United v Arsenal at St James' Park and Manchester United v West Bromwich Albion at Old Trafford.

11.30 Film: The Peacemaker. (1997) Two mismatched government operatives are forced to put aside their differences to find a stolen cache of nuclear warheads. Action thriller, with George Clooney.

1.25 Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.30** BBC News.

BBC2

6.00 Commonwealth Games 2018. Live rugby sevens coverage on the 11th and final day. **9.15** Commonwealth Games: Closing Ceremony 2018. Live coverage from Carrara Stadium in Queensland, Australia. **3.00** Live Women's FA Cup Football. Chelsea Ladies v Manchester City Women (Kick-off 3.30pm). **5.30** Flog It! (R)

6.30 Today at the Games. Clare Balding and Gabby Logan round up the best of the action from day 11 of the Commonwealth Games in Queensland, as the event was brought to its conclusion. Seventeen more champions were crowned throughout the final day, including in the men's and women's marathons at Southport Broadwater Parklands. Plus, the netball and rugby sevens tournaments came to an end at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre and Robina Stadium respectively, while the badminton, squash, basketball and table tennis all reached a climax.

8.00 Britain's Biggest Warship. New series. Film-maker Chris Terrill captures an intimate and personal portrait of life on board ultra-modern super aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, as its crew learns the intricacies of a warship that will change the way Britain goes to war. In this first instalment, early 2016 sees sailors begin to arrive in Rosyth dockyard in Scotland where the ship is still in construction, but nearing completion.

9.00 My Year with the Tribe. New series. Writer Will Millard lives with a tribe in Indonesia to understand the pressures they face in adapting to a modern world they have only known in the past 40 years.

10.00 Famalam. New series. Comedy sketch show, featuring a misunderstood superhero, Croydon's leading witch doctor, and some much-needed cultural diversity in Midsomer Murders.

10.20 Film: The Homesman. (2014) A frontier woman persuades an outlaw to help her lead three traumatised women across the wilderness. Western, directed by and starring Tommy Lee Jones, with Hilary Swank.

12.15 Film: The Hunters. (1996) **2.05** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **3.05** Holby City. (R) **4.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Sooty. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Super 4. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.25** The Tom and Jerry Show. (R) **7.30** Teen Titans Go! (R) **7.45** Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** The Haunted Hathaways. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Zoe Ball on Sunday. **9.25** Love Your Garden. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **11.00** Britain's Got Talent. (R) **12.20** Britain's Got More Talent. (R) **1.20** ITV News; Weather. **1.30** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **2.30** You've Been Framed! (R) **3.00** Tipping Point. (R) **4.00** Change Your Tune. **5.00** The Chase: Celebrity Special. (R)

6.00 Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule. The madcap panel show returns, with Micky Flanagan, Robert Peston, Sally Dynevor and Anneka Rice tasked with saving planet Earth from any potential alien invasion. (R)

6.30 ITV News; Weather.

6.45 Regional Programme; Weather.

7.00 Celebrity Catchphrase. Stephen Mulhern hosts a celebrity special of the game show, asking contestants Ellie Simmonds, Fay Ripley and Jimmy Carr to "see it and say it" as they try to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round. (R)

8.00 The Durrells. An Italian family arrive on the island, provoking jealousy in Louisa, who begins to suspect there is something suspicious about the new arrivals after inviting them over.

9.00 The Good Karma Hospital. The team tries to save survivors from a collapsed building. Ruby discovers a secret concerning one of her patients, and Ram helps a woman whose husband is missing.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with Allegra Stratton. (R)

11.15 This Time Next Year. More participants take on 12-month challenges, including parents hoping to transform their deaf baby girl's life. Davina McCall presents. (R)

12.10 Jackpot247. **3.00** Take on the Twisters. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Eat the Week. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** Formula 1 Chinese Grand Prix Highlights. **4.30** Speed with Guy Martin: F1 Challenge. (R) **5.30** Grand Designs. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Escape to the Chateau. Dick and Angel decide they will live as self-sufficiently as they can while restoring the chateau, and invest in some chickens to provide them with eggs for breakfast every morning. However, they still have countless problems to deal with, and have only £20,000 left to spend on the project. The chateau is still without either heating or water, while the 59 windows are crumbling. While Dick's renovations fall behind schedule, Angel is in her element coming up with ideas for what the finished building will look like. (R)

8.00 The Crystal Maze. New series. Richard Ayoade guides the Hauxwell family through the Aztec, Medieval, Industrial and Future zones of the Maze, tackling a range of skill, mystery, physical and mental challenges to win time in the Crystal Dome.

9.00 Homeland. Carrie has problems at home. Saul and Wellington work on Paley. Espionage drama, starring Claire Danes, Mandy Patinkin and Linus Roache.

10.05 Lifeline. Spanish drama, starring Pablo Derqui as a surgeon who begins having visions after undergoing a heart transplant that inspire him to discover how the donor died.

11.00 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown. Jonathan Ross, Lee Mack and Victoria Coren Mitchell join regulars Jon Richardson and Jimmy Carr for the words-and-numbers game. (R)

12.05 Film: Out of the Furnace. (2013) Crime thriller, starring Christian Bale. **2.10 Film:** Hotel Salvation. (2016) Premiere. Comedy drama, starring Adil Hussain. **3.50** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.20** Gillette World Sport. **4.45** The Question Jury. A new juror stirs things up by gossiping about some of the others. (R) **5.40** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Little Princess. **6.10** Wissper. (R) **6.20** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.30** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.35** The Secret Life of Puppies. (R) **6.40** Moty. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Simon. (R) **6.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **7.05** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.15** Thomas & Friends. (R) **7.25** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.35** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.35** Nella the Princess Knight. (R) **8.50** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **9.00** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.15** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.30** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Peppa Pig. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.35** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.20** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **11.50** FIA Formula E. **12.50** Traffic Cops: Under Attack. (R) **1.45** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **2.45 Film:** A Royal Night Out. (2015) **3.45** 5 News Update. **3.50 Film:** A Royal Night Out. (2015) Concluded. **4.40 Film:** The Hundred-Foot Journey. (2014) **5.40** 5 News Update. **5.45 Film:** The Hundred-Foot Journey. (2014) Concluded.

6.55 5 News Weekend.

7.00 Royal Babies: The Crown and the Crib. Documentary exploring the lives of babies within the British monarchy, and assessing how royal approaches have changed over time. (R)

8.00 Meghan Markle: The First 100 Days. Profile of Prince Harry's fiancee, examining her first engagements as a member of the royal family and questioning what influence she may have on the monarchy in the future.

9.00 Meghan and Harry: In Their Own Words. Documentary examining interviews, speeches and social media posts by the royal couple to reveal a full picture of their lives before and after their relationship became public.

10.00 Film: The Dater's Handbook. (2016) Premiere. When a woman turns to a relationship self-help book for advice, she finds herself torn between two men. Romantic comedy, starring Meghan Markle.

11.45 Inside Kensington Palace: Fit for a Princess. The history of famous buildings, beginning by going behind the scenes of the royal residence. (R)

1.10 SuperCasino. **3.10** Secrets of the Great Yorkshire Castle. (R) **4.00** My Mum's Hotter Than Me! (R) **4.45** House Doctor. (R) **5.10** Divine Designs. (R) **5.35** Wildlife SOS. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Only Connect **7.30** University Challenge **8.00** Giraffes: Africa's Gentle Giants **9.00** Titanic's Tragic Twin: The Britannic Disaster **10.00** Why the Industrial Revolution Happened Here **11.00** Conversations: Alex Salmond **12.00** Timeshift: Eyes Down! The Story of Bingo **1.00** Insect Worlds **1.30** Revolution and Romance: Musical Masters of the 19th Century **2.30** Titanic's Tragic Twin: The Britannic Disaster **3.30** Close

ITV2
11.50 You've Been Framed! Gold **12.20 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **1.20** FYI Daily **1.25 Film:** Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **2.10 Film:** Casper (1995) **3.10** FYI Daily **3.15 Film:** Casper (1995) **4.05** Britain's Got Talent **5.35** Britain's Got More Talent **6.40 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **7.40** FYI Daily **7.45 Film:** The Mummy (1999) **9.00 Film:** Fast & Furious 7 (2015) **10.35** FYI Daily **10.40 Film:** Fast & Furious 7 (2015) **11.40** Family Guy **1.10** American Dad! **2.00** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.25 A Touch of Frost **3.40** Inspector Morse **6.00** Lewis **8.00** The Cruise **9.00** Tommy Cooper Forever **10.00 Film:** Changeling (2008) **12.50** Blue Murder **2.35** Tommy Cooper Forever **3.25** Road to Avonlea **5.55** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.25 Film: The Last Sunset (1961) **12.30** FYI Daily **12.35 Film:** The Last Sunset (1961) **1.45 Film:** Bend of the River (1952) **2.50** FYI Daily **2.55 Film:** Bend of the River (1952) **3.35 Film:** Jeremiah Johnson (1972) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45 Film:** Jeremiah Johnson (1972) **5.50** Mr Bean **6.55** The Big Fish Off **8.00** River Monsters **9.00 Film:** Tremors (1990) **10.05** FYI Daily **10.10 Film:** Tremors (1990) **11.00 Film:** Universal Soldier: Regeneration (2009) **12.15** FYI Daily **12.20 Film:** Universal Soldier: Regeneration (2009) **12.55** The Saint **2.00** It's Not Rocket Science **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
11.00 The Goldbergs **1.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine **2.00** The Big Bang Theory **5.50** Young Sheldon **6.15** The Big Bang Theory **6.45 Film:** The Net (1995) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00** The Inbetweeners **11.10** The Big Bang Theory **12.05** Tattoo Fixers **1.10** The Inbetweeners **2.15** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.05** Rude Tube **3.30** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 Ice Age: Continental Drift (2012) **1.00** Shark Tale (2004) **2.45** Shrek (2001) **4.30** Speed 2: Cruise Control (1997) **6.55** Dante's Peak (1997) **9.00** Transformers: Dark of the Moon (2011) **12.00** Tank 432 (2015) **1.45** Monsieur Lazhar (2011) **3.55** Close

PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Deadly Duplicate, Channel 5, 3.20pm
A struggling single mother in the midst of a fierce custody battle is framed for the murder of her wealthy father by her ambitious identical twin sister. Thriller, starring Jen Lilley and Peter Douglas. (2018)

TUESDAY
Deadly Delusion, Channel 5, 3.15pm
In search of a fresh start, Julia, a troubled woman, moves to Los Angeles with her new boyfriend. After settling into a new home, strange things begin to happen, and Julia becomes convinced that her demons have moved with her. Thriller, starring Haylie Duff, Mike Faiola and Teri Polo. (2017)

WEDNESDAY
Admission, Channel 4, 1.35am
A by-the-book university admissions officer visits an unconventional school run by a former college friend to interview a gifted student. She begins to suspect the pupil may be the son she gave up for adoption, and the experience makes her rethink her uncompromising outlook on life. Comedy drama, with Tina Fey and Paul Rudd. (2013)

Shaun of the Dead, Friday, ITV, 11.15pm

THURSDAY
Patricia Cornwell's At Risk, Channel 5, 3.15pm
An ambitious district attorney wants to improve her political standing by cracking a murder case that has gone unsolved for 20 years. She recruits a state police detective to take on the investigation, but he ends up uncovering another crime much closer to home. Mystery, starring Andie MacDowell, Daniel Sunjata and Annabeth Gish. (2010)

FRIDAY
Shaun of the Dead, ITV, 11.15pm
An unambitious 29-year-old man recently dumped and trapped in the job from hell decides to get his life back on track. Unfortunately, he has to put his plans on hold when zombies rise from their graves and stalk the streets of London to feast on the living. Comedy horror, starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Kate Ashfield, Dylan Moran, Lucy Davis, Bill Nighy and Penelope Wilton. (2004)

Neil is getting all fired up about a new wi-fi mast

It was a month in which an asteroid was named in honour of Freddie Mercury to mark what would have been his 70th birthday, the Summer Paralympic Games opened in Rio, Stan Wawrinka won the US Open men's tennis singles title, Sam Allardyce quit as England manager - and the BBC's Landmark Sitcom Season was in full swing.

Most viewers will remember that the last in that list saw the return of much-missed favourites such as Porridge and Goodnight Sweetheart, as well as a look at the early life of Keeping Up Appearances' Hyacinth Bucket.

But sneaking in there was a selection of pilot editions for various prospective programmes, including Motherland (a full run of which aired last November) and Home From Home.

The latter is back this week and is making the leap from BBC Two to prime-time BBC One, so clearly its makers have heaps of faith in it.

Johnny Vegas heads the cast as Neil Hackett who, along with his wife Fiona, has achieved his long-cherished dream of moving to a lodge in the Lake District. However, it seems that at every turn, their wealthy, effortlessly 'superior' neighbours the Dillons manage to spoil it.

Will the Hacketts ever get the upper hand?

"We are thrilled with the news that Home From Home is going to series and cannot wait to get to work," claims Vegas when news of the full series was announced almost 18 months ago. "We all felt we were on to something very special whilst making the pilot and were rewarded with some wonderful feedback.

"We have so much more to explore with these characters and relish the opportunity to share where they go from here. The opportunity to work closely with Home From Home's creators, fellow cast members and producer Rebecca Papworth is one I'm chuffed to have. We are absolutely chomping at the bit to deliver a worthy addition to BBC One's rich comedy pedigree."

The BBC's controller of comedy commissioning, Shane Allen, adds: "Featuring a knock-out cast, rich comedy themes – the northern family versus the southern one – plus those on their way up the class ladder alongside those on their way down.

"There is something for everyone to relate to and it has a big heart making it the perfect fit for BBC One. We need cheering up now more than ever and it's about time Johnny Vegas was front and centre of a broad appeal sitcom."

Regular TV viewers may want to point out to Mr Allen that Vegas already appears in Still Open All Hours, but while that is rather cosy, Home From Home promises to have more bite.

Vegas isn't the only big name to sign up either – Adam James and Emilia Fox, who featured in the pilot, are returning too, alongside Pearce Quigley and Susan Calman.

And with a pedigree like that behind it, the series can surely be nothing else but a hit.

Johnny Vegas and Niky Wardley star in Home from Home, Friday, BBC1, 9.30pm

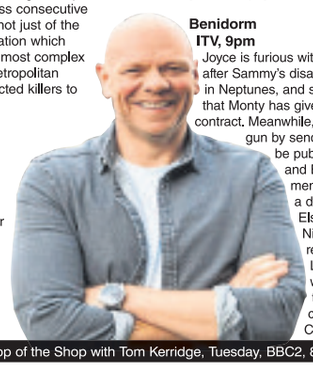
BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
The Queen's Green Planet
ITV, 9pm
Documentary following Her Majesty the Queen and an ambitious legacy project to create a global network of protected forests, spanning the 53 countries of the Commonwealth. The film also features a conversation between the Queen and Sir David Attenborough in the gardens of Buckingham Palace last summer, with the subjects ranging from climate change to conkers and birthday gifts. There is also footage of the members of the royal family involved so far in making the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy a reality.

TUESDAY
Top of the Shop with Tom Kerridge
BBC2, 8pm
Four food producers with fledgling businesses test out their products on the locals in Malhamdale in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. They have two days in the shop to promote and sell their wares. This time it's makers of preserves, pickles and spreads battling it out for a place in the final. Tom Kerridge meets members of the community as they try the unusual preserves. Meanwhile, judges Alison Swan Parente and Nisha Katona visit the food producers at home to see how well their product is made.

Stephen: The Murder that Changed a Nation
BBC1, 9pm
In April 1993, 18-year-old black student Stephen Lawrence was murdered in an unprovoked attack by a group of white youths. Now as the 25th anniversary approaches, this fascinating three-part documentary, which is shown across consecutive evenings, sets out to tell the story not just of the crime, but the subsequent investigation which would turn into one of the longest, most complex and arguably mishandled in the Metropolitan Police's history, allowing the suspected killers to escape justice for nearly 20 years.

Wednesday
Watchdog Live
BBC1, 8pm
There's nothing worse than forking out for a purchase – whether it's a big investment such as a holiday or new household appliance, or something smaller – only to find out when it's too late that you've been taken for a ride. If only there was someone to look out for honest consumers. Thankfully, Watchdog Live is back to do just that, as presenters Matt Allwright, Steph McGovern and Nikki Fox regroup at their Salford studio. In the opening episode, they take a look at car parking charges, specifically an astonishing new way that parking companies can hit motorists with charges – and why we should not necessarily have to pay them.


Top of the Shop with Tom Kerridge, Tuesday, BBC2, 8pm

Benidorm
ITV, 9pm
Joyce is furious with Sam and Monty after Sammy's disastrous performances in Neptunes, and she soon finds out that Monty has given him a Solana contract. Meanwhile, Doreen jumps the gun by sending Pauline's novel to be published, and Sheron and Billy take a trip down memory lane and spend a day reliving their youth. Elsewhere, Denis and Nigel are increasingly reluctant to arrest Lesley, and Mateo worries about having to go on another concubine cruise with Crystal Hennessy-Vass.

THURSDAY
Not Going Out
BBC1, 8.30pm
Lee Mack and Sally Bretton star in the domestic comedy which sees the couple appear to go from one disaster to the next, while coping with their three kids, Lucy's disapproving parents, Lee's feckless dad Frank and their world-weary friends Toby and Anna. In this final episode, Lucy begins to consider having a boob job, encouraged by Anna, wondering whether it will help her regain some of the femininity she felt in her youth.

FRIDAY
The Button
BBC1, 8.30pm
From the makers of Taskmaster, the show that proved there's more to Dave than repeats of QI, comes this intriguing new game show. It's set simultaneously in the houses of five UK families, whose members tackle a number of fiendishly fun challenges requiring skill, determination and intellect from the comfort of their living rooms over the course of a day. With different amounts of money up for grabs for each challenge, The Button lets the most successful household pocket everything they've won during the show. However, the losing teams get nothing.

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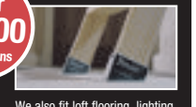
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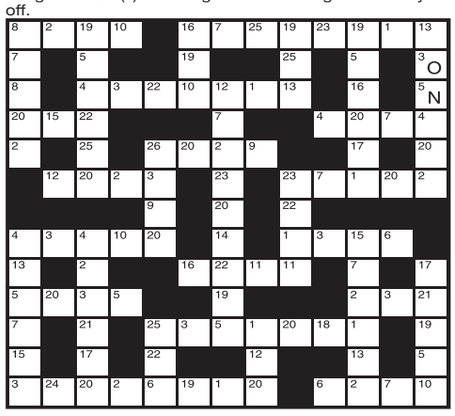
BRAIN GYM

No.475

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



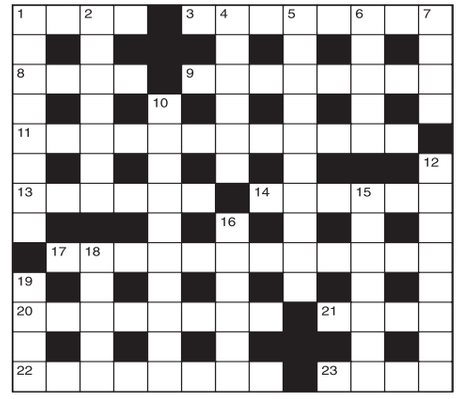
1	14
2	15
3 O	16
4	17
5 N	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	K	B	J	G	F	E	W	V	D	Y	T	H
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
N	S	Q	I	O	M	C	R	X	P	Z	L	U

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Presumably not an ailment of tropical climes (4)
3. Crude to a teacher (8)
8. One only conceals a form of lighting (4)
9. Got back into Parliament (8)
11. Bad narrative from inferior member of family (4,8)
13. Sailor gets a severe telling off (6)
14. More coarse-sounding shopkeeper (6)
17. Unequalled performance from a jailbird? (6,6)
20. Arrange prim seat for prelates (8)
21. Metal from La Paz in current use (4)
22. Is deeper and faster (8)
23. Old and greyer every day initially (4)

Down

1. Plot to get 100 to top of high part of church (8)
2. Beware of the sentry (4,3)
4. Lives where there are 500 sources of water (6)
5. Legal compulsion to be a suitor? (5,5)
6. Dance to remove the effects of sunbathing? (5)
7. Dupes are taken for such a journey (4)
10. Where spectators witness tremendous resistance? (10)
12. Manufactured to a greater extent? (8)
15. Boasting 100 at the oars (7)
16. Where to be an essential part? (6)
18. Lift up, but don't quite commend (5)
19. Work involved in preparing soup (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

1. Agreement (4)
3. Humidity (8)
8. Genuine (4)
9. Creature of prey (8)
11. Disconcerting (12)
13. Rigorous (6)
14. Suitable (6)
17. Slander (4,8)
20. Prolonged (8)
21. Labyrinth (4)
22. Beset (8)
23. Minus (4)

Down

1. Wilful (8)
2. Room (7)
4. Aviator (6)
5. Walker (10)
6. Consumed (5)
7. Certain (4)
10. Aggressiveness (10)
12. Advance (8)
15. Confidential (7)
16. Orb (6)
18. Elects (5)
19. Medicinal plant (4)

Sudoku

		3	8		9	5		
	5			1			7	
		4		5		6		
	1			8			2	6
		2	5		1	7		
	4		6	7			9	
		5				9		
	2			9	5		4	
		1	7		6	2		

Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	6	7	4	9	2	3	1	8
9	2	4	1	3	8	5	7	6
8	1	3	7	5	6	2	9	4
7	9	6	8	2	4	1	5	3
3	4	8	9	1	5	6	2	7
2	5	1	6	7	3	8	4	9
6	8	2	5	4	9	7	3	1
4	7	5	3	6	1	9	8	2
1	3	9	2	8	7	4	6	5

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Stage-fright; 9 Present; 10 Guide; 11 Rites; 12 Outpost; 13 Abrade; 15 Grilse; 18 Fairway; 20 Flute; 22 Roses; 23 Overact; 24 Necessities. Down: 2 Treat; 3 Guessed; 4 Fathom; 5 Ingot; 6 Hair-oil; 7 Spartan fare; 8 Settlements; 14 Reissue; 16 Reflect; 17 Pylons; 19 Waste; 21 Usage.
QUICK - Across: 1 Overweening; 9 Erratic; 10 Demon; 11 Theme; 12 Slender; 13 Idiots; 15 Placed; 18 Transom; 20 Appal; 22 Voice; 23 Nearest; 24 Intersperse. Down: 2 Verge; 3 Retreat; 4 Excuse; 5 Nudge; 6 Nomadic; 7 Restrictive; 8 Incredulity; 14 Iranian; 16 Leakage; 17 Amends; 19 Sieve; 21 Press.

Quiz

1. Which former political leader's middle name is Rolihlahla?
2. Which US weekly magazine was founded in 1925 by Harold Ross?
3. What type of creature is the bushmaster?
4. Which river flows through Lake Constance?
5. In which year was the first EC passport introduced?
6. What is the official report of the proceedings of the British Parliament called?
7. Which English medal was issued in 1588?
8. Who wrote Sinister Street and Whisky Galore?
9. In which country is El Lliama volcano, which erupted in 1994?
10. What is the highest rank in the RAF?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Larch; 2 Hans Christian Andersen; 3 11th November; 4 120; 5 Arctic; 6 Jennifer Capriati; 7 Nuku'alofa; 8 South African; 9 Martyrs; 10 Romania.

Niner: INTRODUCE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

612259 gives a tool,
347852 gives a second tool,
89552 gives an alloy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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Great Dane is a real treasure trove

SCANDINAVIA had long been an area I'd been keen to explore. So when the opportunity arose to visit Aarhus, Denmark's second city, I jumped at the chance.

On the east coast of the Jutland Peninsula, Aarhus is about 116 miles northwest of Copenhagen. A jewel of the Danish east coast, it bore the title of European Capital of Culture in 2017, and was ranked that year by both Vogue and Lonely Planet as a must-visit destination. On arriving, it is quickly easy to see why.

Aarhus is characterised by its blend of historical and contemporary architecture paired with a vibrant, friendly and exciting atmosphere.

JOVIAL

With a population of just over 330,000 it would perhaps not be considered a large city by modern global standards. Yet Aarhus retains a wonderful metropolitan feel without ever being overbearing.

On my first evening I was struck by two things. Firstly, this place was clean. And I mean seriously clean. Not once as I walked the streets did I see a single speck of litter. This, coupled with the freshness of the air.

Secondly, Aarhus clearly seemed to be a city of the young. Street life was dominated by students and young people toward whom the cosmopolitan vibe of the town was geared. There was a jovial buzz on streets filled with excited evening shoppers, and diners indulging in the gastronomic delights the city had to offer.

I looked around and smiled. I was really going to enjoy it here. After a long day travelling and feeling more than a little famished, I headed to Aarhus Street Food. I had been told about this incredible indoor food market, and needed to see it for myself. It did not disappoint.

A superb addition to the city's dining scene, Aarhus Street Food is a bustling hall of culinary delight, showcasing fast cuisine from all over the world. And the community-vibe created by the seating arrangements was the perfect way to enjoy my first meal in this progressive, contemporary and imaginative city.

Having enjoyed an evening of of exploration, I made my way to my accommodation. WakeUp Aarhus was a stylish and, again, very clean hotel a short walk from the railway station. Its central location positioned it perfectly to enjoy all of the attractions the city would have to offer.

The next morning I headed out to see what this intriguing city was really all about. My first stop was ARoS Aarhus Art Museum. One of the largest art museums in northern Europe, ARoS was initially established in 1859, though was re-opened in 2004 with a new modern building.

With 20,700 square metres on 10 levels, ARoS has ample space to showcase its impressive collection of sculptures, paintings and installations. For atop the roof of ARoS sits perhaps the museum's most incredible installation, and one that turns the vista of the city itself into a work of art. Created by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson, the stunning piece, 'Your Rainbow Panorama', is a 150-metre-long circular coloured-glass tunnel walkway. On the roof of ARoS, it sits 50 metres above ground level, and allows visitors to enjoy a breaktaking panoramic view of the city skyline in every colour of the rainbow.

I decided to go and spend some time in the city's Latin Quarter – a wonderfully vibrant area, characterised by narrow cobbled streets, small chic shops and bustling cafes. A perfect weekend in an incredible part of the world.

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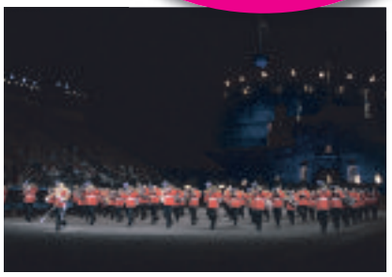

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Two-bedroomed apartment in the heart of city centre

The Love Your Postcode Group are pleased to present this fantastic third floor apartment in Birmingham City Centre for offers in the region of £214,950.

Located in the luxury and sought-after Jupiter development in Ryland Street, the two-bedroom apartment is situated off Broad Street, affording easy access to Birmingham's financial district, bars and restaurants, being perfectly positioned to make the most of the city's vibrant nightlife.

The property comprises an entrance hallway leading to a spacious open plan kitchen/lounge with a balcony that allows plenty of natural light to fill the living room whilst enjoying the peaceful views overlooking the courtyard.

The kitchen is fitted with a range of floor-based and wall-mounted units including an array of fitted appliances to suit your needs. The hallway and kitchen/lounge comes with quality wooden flooring and neutral walls and wooden window frames and doors provide a unique touch to the apartment's interiors.

The property also comprises of two double bedrooms. The master bedroom benefitting from having an en-suite with a fitted shower cubicle. There is also a separate family bathroom with an over-bath shower.

The building is equipped with fob entry system, security cameras and benefits from on-site concierge. The apartment also benefits from having a generously-sized underground allocated secure parking space and is within walking distance of many amenities. New Street Station and Five Ways Station are both within walking distance.

The building enjoys a quiet residential atmosphere. It is also equipped with central heating, double-glazed windows and overall high energy efficiency build. Perfect for any investor or city worker looking to reside in this stunning central location. Additional benefits include newly-fitted carpets in both bedrooms and freshly painted walls throughout.

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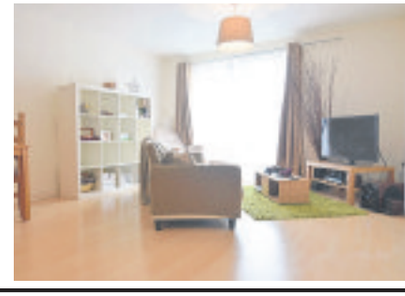
KEY FEATURES

- Third floor apartment
- Two bedrooms
- City centre location
- Balcony overlooking courtyard
- Spacious open plan kitchen/lounge



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Ultra modern property is new to the market

New to the property market, this ultra modern four-bedroomed detached home in Marnham Road, West Bromwich, lies on the ever popular Churchfields Estate.

It is for sale through Connells Estate Agents at £370,000. The property features stunning living space and would be perfect for a growing family. The house includes a kitchen/diner, a large conservatory, an en-suite, guest WC, off-road parking and an integral garage.

Being L-shaped, the kitchen/diner has a range of fitted wall and base units with work surfaces over, plumbing for a washing machine and a door leading to the garden.

WEST BROMWICH £370,000

In more detail, the entrance hall has a window to the side and an under-stairs storage cupboard. The downstairs WC is nearby. The lounge has a bay window to the side. The conservatory has tiled flooring, under floor heating, lights and French doors leading out to the rear garden.

Upstairs, bedroom one has built-in wardrobes and an en-suite shower room. The remaining three bedrooms all have a built-in wardrobe.

The family bathroom has a window to the side, and features a heated towel rail and a storage cupboard. Contact Connells on 0121 525 1177.

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FOR A CHEAP RUBBISH REMOVAL 6 DAYS
Small jobs NOT A PROBLEM
We load, No Skips, Free quotation
GARDEN, HOUSEHOLD, SHED, GARAGE, WHITE GOODS, HOUSE CLEARANCES FURNITURE.
You can also bring your own waste to our fully licensed transfer station
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A CHEAP RUBBISH REMOVAL 7 DAYS
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West Bromwich

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1 Family

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STRYER SPORT Mobility scooter, lights, suspension, only used once, as new. £325. 01922 647302.

WANTED RECLINING Chair, manually operated, must be in good condition, sensible price paid, must deliver.0121 2936133. after 4pm.

2 Leisure Time

Car Boot Sales

CAR BOOT SALE
Saturday, April 14.
8am - 12 noon
St Peter's Church Hall.
Whitehall Road,
West Bromwich.
To book a stall call 07903 754123.

BACK AGAIN
INDOOR TABLE TOP CAR BOOT SALE
Saturday April 14th
Saturday May 12th
Saturday June 9th
7.30am - 1.00pm
New Life Apostolic Church
4 St. James Street,
Wednesbury, WS10 7DY
07860 883092

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BAILEY PAGEANT BORDEAUX 2007 CARAVAN
Fixed bed. Motor mover.
Water carriers. Tyron band.
Many extras.
Ready to go.
£7,000 ono.
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4-berth, Tourer, fixed bed,
plus awning,
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Sighted in Stourport.
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2012 ABI Ambleside 2 bedroom luxurious and spacious model £33,995 on an immaculate & family friendly 5 star park in the breath taking location of historic Harlech with spectacular beaches, castle and gold course minutes away
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Country Cottages / Suites in Wensleydale
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Families Welcome
Walk in scenic countryside by waterfalls or visit historic market towns with friendly Inns
Brochure (24hrs) 01969 624145
email: rita@meadowholidays.com
www.meadowholidays.com

Jumble Sales / Fetes

JUMBLE SALE
Saturday, April 14, 2pm.
Broadway United Reformed Church
Broadway North
Walsall
WS5 3PH.
Admission 20p.

Sports & Leisure

FreeAds
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what's on

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FRIDAY 20TH APRIL
8:30 AM - 3 PM
07783 680 627
FREE ADMISSION

Table Top Sale

HILL TOP METHODIST CHURCH
New Street, Hill Top
West Bromwich
B70 0HW
TABLE TOP SALE
Saturday, April 14.
9am to 1pm
£5 per table
To book ring Ann
0121 556 4726 or 07896 163130.

3 Home & Services

Household Appliances

A MUST CLEAR FOR NEW STOCK
AUTOS FROM £89, COOKERS, FIRES, FRIDGE FREEZERS, ALL DOMESTIC APPLIANCES AT SALE PRICE!
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or 01922 712184

BLOXWICH FENCING
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Credit cards taken • Free quotes
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ITALIAN
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£370.
07437 555084.

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katharine house hospice
Reg charity number: 1011712
We can turn your quality used furniture into 1st class care for patients at Katharine House
Call us now on 01785 760715
for details or to arrange a FREE collection

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That the Business Advertisements(Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

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ASH RECLAMATION
All reclaimed building materials
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New and Used
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07956 627367

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STAILIFT WANTED
Straight, right hand.
Can remove if required.
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Frank Bosworth
Furniture
IN LIQUIDATION
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All Fashion Beds - Sleigh Beds, Metal, Iron and Ottoman Beds
PLUS UPTO 12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT (SUBJECT TO STATUS)
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DISPLAY MODELS
EG GUVNOR RECLINERIN WINE
WAS £999
NOW £299
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100'S OF LEATHER & FABRIC SOFAS, CORNER SUITES AND RECLINER SUITES - MANY HALF PRICE
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CONEYGRE ROAD IND EST, GREAT BRIDGE RD, TIPTON DY4 8XF.
OFF A461 2 MINS FROM NEW TESCO & TOBY CARVERY
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INTEREST FREE CREDIT (T/C'S APPLY)
VISA MasterCard

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CLIENT COMPUTERS
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Virus removal, broken screens, wifi.
Windows problems etc.
Home visits or bring to me.
Long established.
Laptops available.
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The Block Paving Specialists. Patios, Driveways, Pathways, Landscaping & more.
Special Offer £50 PSM
We will beat any like for like written quote
Free Quotes & Advice
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(Based in Stafford)

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SPECIAL OFFER
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Heavy duty panels supplied & fitted.
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DELIVERY AVAILABLE
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"I am extremely happy with the service I get from my Express & Star Classified Sales Representatives and would recommend them to anyone! They have done a very professional job with my website so I get online enquiries as well now."
Michael- Portway Fencing
For great business results call
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Gardening Services

H. COOPER & SON Landscaping / garden maintenance. No job too small, Free Quotes: 07904 929632.

Landywood Tree & Landscaping Services
All garden work, tree felling/lopping, pruning, hedges trimmed, turf, patios, fencing, block-paving etc.
www.landywoodlandscaping.co.uk
01922 898 710 / 07973 177 976

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Same Day Service
Free Quotes
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FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
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0121 6010479

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Full, part and single rubbish removed.
Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
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Garage and sheds cleared.
Leather 3 piece suites and leather chesterfields wanted.
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A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327 / 01902 534021**

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Longer warranty available upon request, fires and surrounds also available.
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SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
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Mini, midi skips
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t.v. / home entertainment

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Bill - TV Link

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4 Pets & Animals

Equestrian Corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses, Donkeys or Ponies have the required Passport information, this is a legal requirement.

Guns & Dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

Pets Corner

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

WEDNESBURY SANCTUARY needs a home for Alfie, a friendly tabby and white young cat, vaccinated/neutered. 0121 502 5027.

5 Business & Farming

Commercial Premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

Overseas Property

NOTICE TO READERS
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FREE, GUARANTEED, instant offer today!
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NOTICE TO READERS
It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

J9 Accommodation
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Studios *from* **£90pw***
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Two bedroom lodge in excellent condition. Sky and BT phone connection, double glazed, full central heating. Sited near Bewdley on a holiday park with swimming pool club house and golf course.
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£33,500
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7 Jobs

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HGV CLASS 1 DRIVERS wanted for evening work. 6pm start, 5-6hrs work, Mon-Fri available. Call Dan at Butlers on 07791 320040.

Manufacturing

CNC SPRING SETTER / Operator req'd part time by Innovative Springs, West Brom. Experience required. Email CV to: enquiries@innovativesprings.co.uk

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01902 317878

ClassifiedAds

8 Motoring

Cars Over £1500

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AUDI A3 SPORTS MODEL 1.6 TDI
Diesel, 5 door
Colour Ibis White,
First registered March 13, one owner, 22,000 miles, MoT and full service history
The car can be seen between 12:00 - 1:00 or after 6pm, either in Smethwick or Birmingham
£10,560
07930 558830

FIAT 500 DIESEL BY DESIGN (model not fuel)
2011, 55,600 miles, Diesel green metallic, EW, stop/start, AC, Bluetooth, usb, glass roof, CD player, CL, MOT, 1 previous owner, alloys, tinted rear windows, spare wheel, tool kit, fsh.
£4,800 o.n.o
07918 621300 (no text)

FORD FIESTA
58 PLATE, 1.4 TDCi ZETEC
Blue edition, metallic black.
65,000 miles, MoT Jan 2019.
Serviced, £30 per year road tax.
Lady owner.
Excellent condition.
£2,499.
07988 837407.

FORD FOCUS GHIA
1.6 PETROL 2008.
61,000 miles, Black, abs, electric windows, air con, alarm, long MoT, metallic paint, cruise control, alloys, new tyres.
£2,600 ono.
07990 549904.

RENAULT CLIO. 62 plate Clio Dynamique Tom Tom Estate 1.2, 28,000 miles, silver, 7 months MoT, £2,850 ono. 07870 902561.

HYUNDAI TUCSON CRDT
2005, 95,000 Miles, electric windows, air con, fsh, MoT, metallic paint, central locking, cruise control, pas, diesel, sunroof, CD, personal plate
£1,995.00
07976 653388

Cars Under £1500

MAZDA 6 2006, 143,000 miles, Silver brake discs last year, MoT until November. £800 ono. 07951 258881.

VAUXHALL MERIVA
1.4 Life, 05 reg, blue, only 58,000 miles, one former keeper, 12 months MoT.
As new condition.
Only £1,195.
07963 464780.

spares & accessories

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Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
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OUR ADVERTISERS are reminded that it is an offence under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 to buy scrap cars/metal for cash.

Vehicles Wanted

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Guaranteed best price for your unwanted cars and vans
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buyer will call

9 Local Information

Public Notices

PUBLIC & LEGAL NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to Marie Hogg on **01902 319694** or email **marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk**
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis) (Temporary Road Closures) Order 2018, intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding via Springfield Lane, Rowley Regis (Windmill End – Bridge Field Walk). Traffic will be diverted via Vale Road, Darby End Road, St Peter's Road, Buffery Road, New Rowley Road, Dudley Road and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 25/05/18 effective from 23/04/18. Purpose – the installation of drainage apparatus at Bullfield Bridge over the Dudley Canal by Stave-Con.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Charles Street and Ryder Street, West Bromwich) (Temporary Road Closures) Order 2018 intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicle from proceeding via the following roads in West Bromwich: it is anticipated that the roads will be closed as follows: **Charles Street (Great Bridge Street – William Street)** – anticipated dates 23/04/18 - 25/06/18. Traffic will be diverted via Great Bridge Street, Phoenix Street, Charles Street and vice-versa. **Ryder Street (Great Bridge Street – William Street)** – anticipated dates 09/07/18 - 10/08/18. Traffic will be diverted via William Street, Charles Street, Great Bridge Street and vice-versa. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work necessitating the road closures is expected to be completed by 10/08/18 effective from 23/04/18. Purpose – gas main renewal scheme by Balfour Beatty for Cadent Gas Ltd.

The Borough Council of Sandwell (Langley Green Level Crossing, Crosswells Road, Oldbury) (Temporary Road Closure No.2) Order 2018 intends to temporarily prohibit any vehicles from proceeding along Crosswells Road, Oldbury between Western Road and Thompson Road. The maximum duration is 18 months, but the work is expected to be completed by 22/04/18 (10.00hrs) effective from 21/04/18 (18.00hrs). Traffic will be diverted via Western Road, Tat Bank Road, Vicarage Road and vice-versa. Purpose – work to signalling equipment on level crossing barriers by Network Rail.

SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
Regeneration and Planning
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I hereby give notice that Sandwell Council has received the following applications under the planning acts which it is required to give public notice for the reason given at the beginning of each group of applications.

The Council are of the opinion that the proposal may affect the setting of a listed building.

DC/18/61665	Mr Brian White Mitchells & Butlers	The Wernley 161 Wolverhampton Road Oldbury B68 0LR	Proposed replacement signage and lighting. Comprising of: 2 x sign written house names, 1 x entrance sign, 1 x brand roundel, 1 x totem, refurbishment of existing 2 corex signs, 1 x brand stamp, 1 x fascia. Lighting includes: 15 x LED flood lights, 2 x LED trough lights, 2 x lanterns. Masonry, doors and window frames to be re-painted.

This is a major application.

The proposed development does not accord with the provisions of the Development Plan in force in the area in which it is situated.

DC/18/61654	Mr D Birch Sandwell Futures Ltd	Shireland Collegiate Academy Waterloo Road, Land Between The Academy & Hadley Stadium, & Vacant Land In Wilson Road, Smethwick B66 4ND	Proposed multi phased development comprising of: new Secondary School teaching block, dining room extension and associated external amenities including; service area, and landscaping (full application); and proposed new Primary School including external play areas, car parking, pupil drop off area and access, service area, and landscaping (outline application all matters reserved).

This is a major application.

DC/18/61643	Mr Nigel Birkmyre Ballycraigy UK Properties Ltd	Vacant Land Adjacent Cornwall Road Industrial Estate Cornwall Road Smethwick B66 2JR	Proposed erection of commercial vehicle dealership and maintenance centre with associated car parking, fencing, hard and soft landscaping and new site access.

Members of the public may inspect copies of these applications at Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3DE (between 8.45a.m. and 5.30p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 9.00a.m. and 5.30p.m. Wednesday and 8.45a.m. to 5p.m. Friday) or via the Council's Public Access website (www.sandwell.gov.uk).

Anyone who wishes to make representations about these applications can do so via the website, or should write to the Council at the above address within 21 days (and 21 days for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent) of the date of this advertisement quoting the application reference number.

MR JAN BRITTON, Chief Executive

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ClassifiedAds

10 Personals

Personal

AT MANYANA Gentlemans Club, 5*. 0121 472 7281. www.manyana massageparlour.co.uk

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Personal

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★★★
LADY LATE 60's
Would like to meet other ladies for Friendship, shopping, maybe days out, holidays, coffee and a chat.
Are you fed up of being on your own,
Please reply, all answered.
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Box Number P21137, Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

★★★
MATURE MALE
Solvent, OHOC seeks similar Female 60's - 70's for companionship, evenings in / out, trips abroad etc. GSOH and 'can do attitude' essential.
Start living now, it's later than you think.
Photo if possible (returned).
Aldridge and District.
Box Number P21140 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

★★★
SEARCHING FOR B DICKINSON
Was a Welder at Birmingham Burner Middlemore Lane, Aldridge, Walsall.
Please get in touch with Edith from Pelsall.
Box Number P21142 , Express and Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES.

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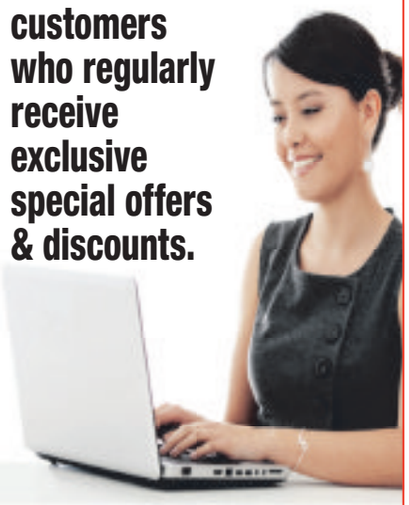

ClassifiedAds

Iconic Mini and Metro are celebrated at show

Visitors and enthusiasts can see hundreds of these popular British cars when the British Motor Museum hosts the National Metro & Mini Show on Sunday, June 3.

Now in its third year, this unique and fun show is aimed at those who love Metros, Minis and MINIs (BMW) and wish to celebrate these fantastic pieces of British design.

Throughout the day there will be various competitions for vehicle entrants to get involved in and plenty of awards to be won.

These include: testing your driving skills and composure in the Precision Slow Driving competition, a Concours including novice classes and a fun 'Show 'n' Shine' where entrants get to judge each other's cars.

Awards on the day will be presented for Best Club Stand, Precision Slow Driving, Spirit of the Show, Concours awards (by year and class), novice classes and Show 'n' Shine awards.

Visitors are guaranteed fun with the 'Noncours' categories, which include the 'Clean Me' award for the dirtiest car, the 'Beige' award for the most boring colour scheme, the 'Mini Me' award for the car and owner that most look-a-like, and the 'Rusty but running' award for the rustiest but road legal car.

Tickets for the show include entry to the museum and cost £10 in advance or £14 on the day for adults, £6 in advance or £9 on the day for children, £10 in advance or £12 on the day for concessions and £39 on the day for a family. Camping is also available.

Visit www.britishmotormuseum.co.uk/events

Britannia Motors

59 **FORD MONDEO ZETEC 2.0 TDCi** Met Blue, Alloys, PAS, EW, AC £3499
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10 **RENAULT CLIO 1.2 MUSIC** Silver, 3 door, Alloys, PAS, CD, AC £2799
60 **CHEVROLET SPARK 1.2** White, Full Body Kit, Alloys, PAS, CD, AC £2999
07 **RENAULT MEGANE SCENIC 1.5** Diesel, Met Gold, Alloys, PAS, EW, AC £1999
08 **VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.9** Diesel, 7 Seats, Met Grey, PAS, AC, EW £2999
10 **PEUGEOT 207 VERVE 1.4** Silver, 5 door, Alloys, PAS, EW, AC £2999
08 **VAUXHALL CORSA 1.2** 5 Door, Silver, Power Steering, Elec Windows, CD Player, Air Conditioning £2799
07 **RENAULT MEGANE CONVERTIBLE** Met Grey, Alloys, PAS, EW, CD, AC £1999
07 **FORD FIESTA 1.4 TDCi STYLE** 5 Door, Blue, Power Steering, Elec Windows, CD Player, Air Conditioning £2299
04 **LANDROVER FREELANDER 1.8** Silver, ½ Black Leather, Alloys £2499
56 **SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 1.6** 3 door, Met Grey, PAS, EW, CD, AC £2999

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5-dr, Titanium Silver, 71,975 miles
£5,650

2016/16 PEUGEOT 208 1.6 THP GTi PRESTIGE
3-dr, Red, 13,500 miles
£13,995

2013/13 MERCEDES-BENZ A200 CDi blueEFFICIENCY AMG SPORT
5-dr, Blue, 44,370 miles
£14,250

2010/10 MAZDA MX-5 1.8iSE
2-dr Convertible, Black, 49,000 miles
£7,995

2012/12 BMW X3 XDRIVE 2.0D SE 5-dr Estate, White, 46,000 miles £14,995
2009/59 BMW 6 SERIES 635d SPORT 2-dr Convertible, Auto, Grey, 62,212 miles £14,495
2013/63 MERCEDES-BENZ A180 blue EFFICIENCY SPORT 5-dr, 33,133 miles £12,995
2015/65 ABARTH 595 1.4 T-JET TURISMO 3-dr, Grey & Red, 10,500 miles £12,495
2010/10 BMW X1 XDRIVE 2.0d SE 5-dr Step Auto, Brown, 42,266 miles £10,995
2015/65 VAUXHALL MOKKA 1.6i EXCLUSIV 5-dr, Black, 35,700 miles £10,750
2013/63 NISSAN QASHQAI 1.6 (117) VISIA 5-dr, White, 14,000 miles £9,995
2015/65 VAUXHALL ADAM 1.2i ROCKS AIR 3-dr, Blue, 17,800 miles £9,495
2017/17 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.3 CDTi 16V VAN START/STOP Silver, Only 5 miles ..... £9,495 + VAT
2015/15 VAUXHALL CORSA1.4 SRi VX-LINE 3-dr, Green, 16,000 miles £8,995
2015/64 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.6T 16V VXR 3-dr, White, 28,000 miles £8,750
2013/13 MINI ROADSTER 1.6 COOPER 2-dr Convertible, Black, 59,800 miles £8,650
2010/10 VAUXHALL CORSA 1.6T VXR LIMITED EDITION 3-dr, Red, 57,000 miles £7,750
2013/63 VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.6i (115) EXCLUSIV 5-dr MPV, Blue, 38,000 miles £7,495
2013/63 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6i 16V ENERGY 5-dr, White, 38,500 miles £7,495
2009/59 MAZDA 2 1.3 TS2 5-dr, Orange, 32,970 miles £4,495
2010/10 RENAULT MEGANE 1.5 DCi 106 DYNAMIQUE TOMTOM 3-dr, Cayenne Orange, 46,589 miles £4,995

2005/55 LAND ROVER FREELANDER
1.8 XEi STATION WAGON 5-dr, Zambezi Silver, 47,922 miles
£4,495

2017/17 VAUXHALL INSIGNIA
1.5T SRi 5-dr, Grey, 2,513 miles
£17,250

2015/65 VOLKSWAGEN AMAROK ATACAMA TDI 4MOTIO
Black, 25,700 miles
£21,495

2015/15 VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC
1.4T 16V SPORT 3-dr, Red, 35,000 miles
£8,995

2012/62 LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER EVOQUE 2.2 eD4 PURE
5-dr Estate, 2WD, White, Full Leather, 38,800 miles
£19,995

2008/58 BMW 6 SERIES 635d SPORT
2-dr Convertible, Auto, Grey, 62,212 miles
£14,495

2014/14 VAUXHALL ASTRA 2.0 CDTi
16V ecoFLEX ELITE (165) 5-dr, Silver, 23,000 miles
£8,495

DUDLEY MOTOR COMPANY

TRINDLE ROAD, DUDLEY, DY2 7AY (Between Cousins and Dudley Zoo)

01384 454100 www.dudleymotorco.co.uk

Sandwell Chronicle Thursday, April 12, 2018

Volvo's new versatile family estate

Volvo Cars has revealed the new V60 five-door, mid-size premium estate, underlining the Swedish company's position as a maker of cars that combine good looks with everyday practicality.

The car was launched in its natural habitat – the driveway of a family home in Stockholm – highlighting Volvo Cars' pedigree in family estates and pinpointing how the V60's versatile design caters to the diverse needs and realities of modern family life.

Tradition

"The family estate driver is an important customer for our business and has been for generations," said Håkan Samuelsson, president and CEO of Volvo Cars. "The new V60 honours that tradition, but also takes it much further."

The new V60 shares Volvo Cars' Scalable Product Architecture (SPA) platform with the award-winning new XC60 and three top-of-the-line 90 series cars, which have been the collective force behind the company's record-breaking global sales performance in recent years.

The SPA-based V60 introduces a new standard to the mid-size premium estate segment with a luxurious interior, increased levels of space, advanced connectivity, and Volvo Cars' latest driver-support systems and other safety technology.

"The V60 really is the central point of the Volvo brand," said Robin Page, senior vice president design at Volvo Cars. "It's refined, has a beautiful proportion and stance, yet delivers on practicality and versatility."

In a first for the segment, customers can access the new V60 via Volvo Cars' new premium subscription service, Care by Volvo*, which offers car access via a monthly flat-fee subscription rather than ownership. Care by Volvo makes having a car as transparent, easy and hassle free as having a mobile phone.

The V60 is the central point of the brand

Reflecting Volvo Cars' industry-first announcement to electrify all new cars from 2019, the V60 comes with two plug-in hybrid powertrain options: the new T6 Twin Engine AWD petrol plug-in hybrid that generates a combined 340 hp, or the T8 Twin Engine AWD petrol plug-in hybrid that delivers 390 hp.

The regular petrol choice includes T5 or T6 powertrains. Drivers who prefer diesel can select D3 or D4 engines.

The new V60 reinforces Volvo Cars' standing as the industry leader in safety, with a comprehensive list of safety features that come as standard, including advanced driver-support systems known from the 90 series and XC60, making the new V60 one of the safest cars on the road.

The V60 comes with two plug-in hybrid powertrain options

The City Safety with Autobrake technology uses automatic braking and detection systems to assist the driver in avoiding potential collisions, and is the only system on the market to recognise pedestrians, cyclists and large animals. In a world first, City Safety now also engages autobraking to mitigate oncoming collisions.

The Pilot Assist system – which supports the driver with steering, acceleration and braking on well-marked roads up to 80 mph – has been upgraded with improved cornering performance. The V60 also includes Run-off Road Mitigation, Oncoming Lane Mitigation and other steering-assistance systems. The optional Cross Traffic Alert with autobrake further improves safety for people inside and outside the car.

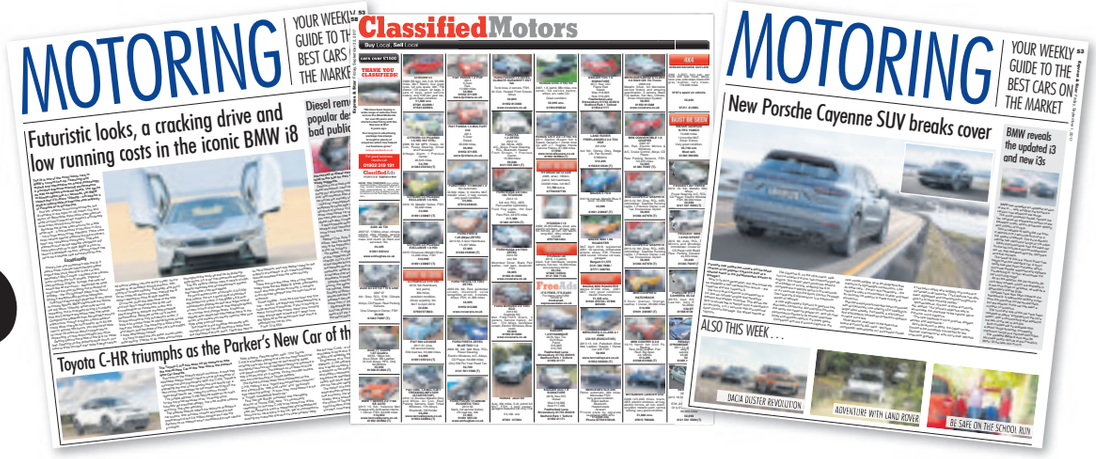
Volvo Cars' Sensus infotainment system is fully compatible with Apple CarPlay, Android Auto and 4G, and keeps drivers connected at all times. The system is controlled via an intuitive tablet-style touch screen that combines car functions, navigation, connected services and entertainment apps.

UK prices for the V60 will start at £31,810 on the road (full pricing and specification details will be announced shortly).

EVERY FRIDAY!

MNA

New Car?



NEW CAR OFFERS

USED CAR DEALS

PRIVATE AND FROM THE TRADE!

NEW CAR REVIEWS & ROAD TESTS

MOTORING

Express & Star

Quarterback Jo Kilby runs with the ball in hand

Quarterback Jo Kilby hands over to the running back

Birmingham Lions are five-time national champions

Running back Ruth Matta (credit: Geoff White)

Diamond date as Lions get ready to roar

RECENTLY-CROWNED national champions for the fifth time in their history, the Birmingham Lions women's American football team will travel to Finland this month to play in the Diamond Bowl, Europe's first-ever international tournament.

Created in 2014, the side are always looking for a new challenge, and this one might just be the biggest so far.

Travelling to Finland, Europe's leading nation for women's American football, the Lions will compete to become 'Europe best women's American football team' in an international tournament held in Helsinki from April 20-22 at the Diamond Bowl.

A squad of 37 players, six coaches and three members of medical staff will take off from London to face some of the top teams from Russia and Finland.

further every season.

Historic

The Lions are pioneers in the women's game in Great Britain and are now well known for pushing the boundaries of the sport. They were the first British women's club side to take on a European club abroad in 2015 when they played French side Les Sparkles and travelled to Helsinki in 2017 to take on the Helsinki Wolverines, Finland's national champions.

A year later, they are about to play in an historic, unprecedented tournament, both on a European and domestic scale. This is the first time that any team affiliated with the British American Football Association (BAFA) Women's has played 11-a-side American football abroad.

Lions' Head Coach Jamie Kilby said: "Having never

SPORTING FEATURE

By Celine Bisson

played an 11-a-side game together before the beginning of the tournament, we cannot underestimate how tough this challenge will be, and that is the exact reason why we want to take it on.

"Having already beaten the Helsinki Wolverines, in a nine-a-side game, hopefully the opposition will be a little wary, and that's what makes it even more exciting! The Birmingham Lions are fierce competitors, and with a roster bursting with talent in their prime I'm confident we are going to surprise more than a few people"

The Lions will face the Helsinki Roosters, hosts and one of Finland's most established team, but also the Saint Petersburg Valkyries and the Tampere Saints in a former Summer Olympics venue, the Helsinki Velodrome. The Lions will open the tournament on April 20 against the Valkyries. Club captain Jo Kilby said: "The team is extremely excited to be returning to Finland, this time to play 11-a-side football versus some of Europe's best exponents.

"Hosted by the Helsinki Roosters, whose pedigree is well regarded, our ambition is to compete, represent our team and ourselves proudly whilst learning masses from the opportunity and experience. Whatever the outcome we hope to have a lot of fun along the way and bring a taste of the Lions brand of football proudly to the European fore."

For more information about the Diamond Bowl, full program and live streams, visit diamond.helsinkiroosters.com or to find out more about the Birmingham Lions, visit birminghamlions.co.uk.

Tettenhall-based Fell tipped to find his form with Worcestershire in county championship

CRICKET coach Kevin Sharp is backing Worcestershire batsman Tom Fell to bounce back from the challenges of last summer and enjoy a productive 2018 campaign back in Division One of the County Championship.

Head coach Sharp says Wolverhampton batsman Fell, from Tettenhall, is 'in a good frame of mind and looking very good at the crease' with the county cricket season set to get underway tomorrow, Friday.

The 24-year-old scored 1,000 championship runs when Worcestershire were last in the top flight in 2015 and he greatly impressed the then champions Yorkshire with his century in the opening game of that season.

Now he will be striving to play a full part in the county's ambitions as they try to make their mark in Division One, with the opening match away to Hampshire. Sharp said: "Tom is still relatively young and every player will go through a tough period. His was probably a bit longer than he would have liked but it won't do him any harm. He is in a good frame of mind, he looks very good at the crease.

"He probably enjoyed a little break at the end of the season like we all did and he looks absolutely fine. I'd be very confident that he will go on and have a good season. He got 1,000 runs the last time he played in Division One. He got a fine century against Yorkshire and they were very impressed."

In terms of last summer, Sharp added: "Sometimes when you are out of form, the confidence levels and the technique go hand in hand. If you are a bit low on confidence, it can affect your technique. You might grip the bat a bit hard so it affects your balance and your bat path and those things were happening a little for Tom which is not unusual.

"But once he has managed to spend some time at the crease again, and started to relax and enjoyed that feeling of being out there again, all those other things will just fall into place."

Worcestershire have been forced to revise their pre-season plans after a succession of wash-outs.

Not a ball was bowled in three days of scheduled cricket with Gloucestershire at Bristol and a three-day first class game with Leeds-Bradford MCCU at RGS Worcester suffered the same fate.

Move to delay start of season

BIRMINGHAM League clubs have been asked to vote on whether to push back the start of their season by a week following prolonged bad weather.

The league's cricket committee is asking clubs for their views after snow and heavy rain throughout March and into April have left many groundsmen struggling to prepare pitches ahead of the scheduled April 21 start.

And committee members have made the recommendation to clubs that the league programme should be postponed until Saturday April 28.

Fixtures due to be played on April 21 would be played on bank holiday Monday, August 27, is the proposal is backed.

The recommendation will be implemented if 75 per cent of member clubs are in favour. The deadline for clubs to make their feelings known was Monday.

Supporters will come to blows at hall

TOMMY Langford defends his British Middleweight Title against Jason Welborn at Walsall Town Hall on Friday, May 4.

'The Baggies Bomber' faces fellow West Bromwich Albion supporter, Welborn, on BCB Promotions' 'Neutral Ground: Battle of the Baggies', sponsored by Alliance Scaffolding and Grosvenor Casino Walsall.

Langford defended the Crown he won when he defeated Sam Sheedy (back in November 2016) earlier this year as he recorded a unanimous points victory over Jack Arnfield. This will be his second defence off the Lord Lonsdale belt and his first fight in the Black Country since 2015.

Welborn is himself coming off the back of a career-best victory over Marcus Morrison. The 31-year-old beat the previously unbeaten prospect to claim the WBC International Silver Middleweight Title and enjoyed a keep-busy fight, routine win over Christian Hoskin-Gomez at the tail end of last year.

It's an intriguing contest between two local fighters who are ranked third and fourteenth in the country respectively.

"This is a proper fight," explained BCB Promotions' Head of Boxing, Errol Johnson. "It has everything. There is the British Title on the line between two of the country's best middleweights. On top of that, Tommy resides in Birmingham and Jason is a Black Country lad, so there's that rivalry along with the fact they're both Albion fans."

A stacked undercard for Neutral Ground has also been confirmed.

Chief Support is Doncaster Heavyweight, and Twitter sensation, Dave Allen. The 26 year-old has fought the likes of Dillian Whyte and Luis Ortiz.

No under-21 final to be staged at Brummies venue

BIRMINGHAM will no longer host the British Under-21 speedway final. The prestigious individual event was set to take place at Perry Barr this month.

But the British Speedway Promoters' Association have now pulled the fixture.

Edwards Plumbing Brummies co-promoter David Mason explained: "During the winter, we were asked if we'd like to have the British Under-21 final at Perry Barr. We jumped at the chance. They then told us it had to be run on a night where there are no other fixture clashes.

"So we looked into a couple of Tuesday dates and were waiting for a few things to come back regarding our racenight planning permission.

"We identified a couple of Thursdays that would have been a lot easier – but because it could have potentially ruled one or two riders out of their Championship meetings, we were told that was a no-go."

Gold hope Ben following AJ's wisdom

BOXING by Ryan Walters

WHEN Anthony Joshua advises you to capitalise on your opportunities in the ring, you'll do what Ben Whittaker plans to do and listen.

The 20-year-old, who trains alongside the unified heavyweight champion of the world at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, barely broke a sweat as he earned a place in the Commonwealth Games quarter-final with a unanimous victory. His opponent – Dariel Ebanks of the Cayman Islands – offered up little and was picked apart by the British number one, who barely broke a sweat as he danced around the ring throwing efficient, point-scoring punches.

Darlaston's Whittaker knew that he should return home from the Gold Coast with the gold, before his next test, which was due to be Josh Docherty of Scotland, yesterday, Wednesday.

"I feel great, first fight of the tournament so there's no point going out there and killing myself," said the middleweight. "Obviously, make it convincing, which I did. Get through, get the rust off and I'm ready to go again. I didn't do everything I could have done but there wasn't really much coming back or nothing to worry about. Being and training around Anthony Joshua, who has come through the same set-up as us at the EIS and if he can do it, come from where he's come from with the background he had, he's made himself a role model for all young boxers. We've got to stay level headed.

The biggest danger Whittaker faced on Sunday came from his opponent's lunging head, the West Bromwich-born fighter looked exceptionally light on his feet not willing to risk a cut.

"I'm one of the favourites for gold but I just take it stride by stride."

WEDNESBURY'S WINNING HABIT

Wednesbury RUFC 24
Aston Old Edwardians RUFC 10

THIS was Wednesbury's penultimate game of the season and their last home game, their opponents Aston Old Edwardians.

Wednesbury had already secured promotion, and were expecting a tough game, it turned out to be a lot tougher than expected.

With the home side nearly back to full strength coach Gary Summers was expecting a better performance from his team. For the first 15 minutes the game was end to end with some great tackles being made from both sides, but Wednesbury should have scored two tries only to make silly errors at the last minute.

With 20 minutes gone Wednesbury took the lead, John McGregor, newly returned to the side, won the ball from a ruck and dived over the line for the try, no conversion.

The home side could not increase their score. Then, right on the stroke of half time in trying to clear their line a miskick went straight to an Aston player who ran evading Wednesbury tackles to go over under the post, they added the conversion to go in at half time in the lead. With just four minutes of the second half gone Matt Dale picked up the ball from the back of the scrum dived over the line for the try, then he added the conversion.

Wednesbury were awarded a scrum on the five metre line, John McGregor flicked the ball to scrum half Steve Worthy who forced his way over the line, no conversion.

With 10 minutes remaining Aston were awarded a penalty, they successfully converted.

Then it was Wednesbury's turn, Dom Weathers received the ball in his own half he went on the run, he raced down the wing evading Aston's tackling then he cut into the middle of the field going over under the posts, Matt Dale converting. For the remaining few minutes both sides battled hard, but defences stayed strong.

Next week Wednesbury head to Bloxwich for the final game of the season kick-off 3pm.

After the game Wednesbury coach Gary Summers said John McGregor was man of the match, adding: "He had a great game in his first game back after a number of weeks out."

He did sound a warning shot though: "The reluctance for some players to step up and commit to competitive rugby will be costly next season in the league above. Hopefully the influx of new players will increase the competition for places and push Wednesbury rugby club on to greater things."

Wednesbury 2nds lost away to Stone 2nds 25-12, Wednesbury's points coming from tries by Brett Hooper, Martin Brotherton and a conversion from Rob Dale.

Dan Blake seen on the ball for Wednesbury as they kept the momentum going after a successful season

Foster vows to stick with the Baggies

BEN FOSTER has pledged his future to the Baggies and vowed to stay at the club regardless of which division they're in next season.

Albion's No.1 is ready to mount a promotion charge next term after the club's inevitable relegation is confirmed. And he's urged those team-mates who are willing to work hard for the badge to stay with him at The Hawthorns.

Ben Foster

"I'll be here," he confirmed, after Saturday's 1-1 draw with Swansea. "I've got no interest in trying to move clubs. I'm very settled and I'm sure there are quite a few others who would love to stay and help us get back to the Premier League.

"If the worst comes to the worst and we end up in the Championship next season we've got to bounce back up, it's as simple as that," said Foster. "I'd like to keep a core of the players that really want to dig in and work hard and be in a tough fight to get out of the Championship because it is a tough fight as well."

However, Foster is not ready to write this season off just yet, and urged the Baggies to finish on a high for caretaker boss Darren Moore.

"Everybody would like to finish strongly, not just for the club and the fans but also for Mooro," said Foster.

Darlaston stay in top six after win

Wyrley 0 Darlaston Town (1874) 2

DARLASTON produced a distinctly average performance running out 2-0 winners, but they will be grateful of the three points to maintain their position in the top six.

On an uneven playing surface both sides failed to keep the ball with stray passes and niggling fouls being the order of the day.

Darlaston broke the deadlock in the 36th minute. Giles eventually managed to get the ball under control to finish with a crisp right foot shot past keeper Williams. Then late in the second half, a penalty sawLucas Hough step up to beat Joe Williams giving Darlaston a 2-0 win.

★★★

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford.
Thursday, April 12, 2018

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